DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 447 269 CE 080 833

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| AUTHOR | Austin, Ann, Ed.; Hynes, Geraldine E., Ed.; Miller, Roxanne T., Ed. |
| TITLE | Proceedings of the Annual Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult Continuing, and Community Education (18th, St. Louis, Missouri, September 22-24, 1999). |
| INSTITUTION | Missouri Univ., St. Louis. School of Education.; Missouri Association for Adult, Continuing, and Community Education.; American Society for Training and Development, St. Louis, MO. St. Louis Chapter. |
| PUB DATE | 1999-09-22 |
| NOTE | 331p.; Also co-sponsored by the University of Missouri, St. Louis, Continuing Education & Outreach. |
| PUB TYPE | Collected Works - Proceedings (021) |
| EDRS PRICE | EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Adult Basic Education; *Adult Education; Adult Educators; Adult Learning; *Adult Students; Basic Skills; Cognitive Style; Community Education; Computer Uses in Education; Continuing Education; Deafness; Distance Education; *Educational Improvement; *Educational Practices; *Educational Research; Extension Education; Informal Education; Internet; Jews; Labor Force Development; Learning Disabilities; *Lifelong Learning; Mentors; Multiple Intelligences; Music; Muslims; Partnerships in Education; Postsecondary Education; Professional Development; Refugees; Research Methodology; Research Reports; Spirituality; Teaching Methods; Theory Practice Relationship; Transformative Learning; Womens Education |

ABSTRACT

This document contains the proceedings of a 1999 conference on adult, continuing, and community education held in St. Louis, Missouri. The following 39 papers are included: "Program Effectiveness Evaluation: Recertification and Job Upgrading for Adult Refugees" (Non-Native Speakers of English) (Adelman); "Rethinking the Linkages between Higher and Adult Education: Implications for Graduate Education" (Beach and Kovan); "Creating Effective Non-Profit Volunteer Training Programs by Utilizing Adult Education Principles" (Bengels); "Empowering Women for Development through Regionally Planned Community Education Strategies: A Southern African Perspective" (Braimoh and Lekoko); "Children of Abraham Sit Down Together To Learn: Initiating Interreligious Learning with Muslims and Jews" (Charaniya and Walsh); "Voices of Job Loss: From Disorienting Dilemma to Perspective Transformation" (Coleman-Hoeppel); "Experiences of Faculty Members Who Interact with Students in an Online Environment" (Conceicao-Runlee and Reilly); "'Goin' Down the Road': Learning at the Edge of Social Movements for Cultural and Ecological Sustainability" (Curry, Liao, Outlaw, and Woodhouse); "An Exploration of Electronic Discussion as an Adult Learning Strategy" (Daley); "Learning and Context: Connections in Continuing Professional Education" (Daley and Carlsson); "Context in the Contextualized Curriculum: Adult Life Worlds as Unitary or Multiplistic?" (Dirkx, Amey, and Haston); "An Examination of the Relevance of Doctoral Study to University Continuing Education Practitioners in the USA" (Donaldson, Bailey, Russell, and Pearce); "Learning Styles" (Droegemueller); "Multiple Intelligences and Adult

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Learning" (Ferro); "Improving the Reading and Writing Skills of Deaf Adult Learners" (Flynn and Davis); "On a Collision Course: Distance Education and Team Leadership Skills" (Frantz); "Mentoring and Women's Adult Development: Implications for Female Faculty" (Gibson); "Federalization of Adult Education in Oklahoma under Governor 'Alfalfa' Bill Murray, 1933-1941" (Ice and Nolan); "The Impact of the Internet on Research-to-Practice in Adult, Continuing, Extension, and Community Education" (Isenberg and Titus); "'Dance to Learn': Reaffirmation of Cultural Rituals in Instructing Adult Learners in Formal Settings" (Kamen, Kassinger, and Jefferson); "Professionals' Workplace Devaluation" (Klunk); "Symbolic Representations as Mediators for Meaning Construction: An Exploration of Transformative Pedagogy within a Professional Development Context" (Kritskaya and Dirkx); "Transcending Boundaries: Building Community through Residential Adult Learning" (Lawrence); "Self-Directed Professional Development in the Continuing Education of Adult Educators" (Levine and Hikawa); "Exploring the Theory and Practice of Feminist Business" (Magnuson); "Urban Workforce Development: A Collaborative Planning Framework for Improving Basic Skills" (Martin and Sykes); "The Adult Education Implications of 'Work-First' Welfare Reform Policy on Welfare Recipients" (Miller); "ESL [English as a Second Language] Program Evaluation: Lessons from outside the U.S." (Nolan); "Framework To Identify In-Service Education Needs of Extension Practitioners" (Radhakrishna, Spalding, and Smith); "'Aren't You Glad You're Not Stupid?' The Experiences of Adult Students with Invisible Disabilities and Higher Education" (Rocco); "A Piece of the Puzzle: John Ohliger, 'Music Director' of Basic Choices" (Rocco and Rowland); "Adult Learning through Religious Music in an African American Church Choir" (Rowland); "Music in Adult Education" (Rowland); "Expanding Educational Programs: Assessing Business and Community Members' Needs and Support for Community Education" (Suvedi and Lapinski); "A Critical Review of Teaching Belief Research: Implications for Adult Education" (Taylor); "Women 'Teaching across Borders' for Social Change in Adult Education: The Interconnecting Role of Culture and Spirituality" (Tisdell); "A Multi-site Case Study Examining Mentoring Practices" (Merkt); "Understanding Overloaded Adults' Readiness Level for Learning: McClusky's Theory of Margin Refuted" (Wolflin); and "Keynote Address: 'The Accidental Tourist'" (Berlin). The papers include abstracts and references. (KC)

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ED 447 269

The Eighteenth Annual

# Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference

## in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education

**September 22–24, 1999**

**St. Louis, Missouri**

Hosted &
co-sponsored by:

University of Missouri St. Louis

School of Education
Continuing Education & Outreach

Missouri Association for Adult Continuing & Community Education

ASTD

American Society for Training and Development, St. Louis Chapter

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J Henschke

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# *Proceedings*
*of the*
# Eighteenth Annual

# *Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference*

## *in Adult, Continuing and Community Education*

**September 22 – 24, 1999**

*Edited by*

**Ann Austin, M.Ed.**
Director of Education
SSM Rehab Hospital
St. Louis, Missouri

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Assistant Professor of Managerial Communication
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*Proceedings of the*

# *1999 Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference*
### *in Adult, Continuing and Community Education*

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**Website: http://coe.ohio-state.edu/cete/ericacve/index.htm**

## Acknowledgments

| | |
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| 1999 *Conference Brochure and Proceedings* cover design: | Amanda Miller<br>Continuing Education & Outreach<br>University of Missouri-St. Louis |
| 1999 *Proceedings* publication CD ROM development: | Marcel Bechtoldt<br>University of Missouri-St. Louis |
| | Connie Jeffries<br>Continuing Education & Outreach<br>University of Missouri-St. Louis |
| Conference Book Bags: | Boeing Corporation<br>Special thanks to Thomas Titus |
| Pre-Conference Site Visits: | Trans World Airlines<br>Southwestern Bell Tele*Community* Center |
| Evening at Anheuser-Busch | Pat Garland<br>Anheuser-Busch Training Center |
| | Vincent Vento<br>MAACCE |
| Graduate Student Conference | St. Louis Community Foundation |

University of Missouri St. Louis

Continuing Education and Outreach
College of Arts and Sciences

Office of the Associate Dean

September 22, 1999

Dear Research-to-Practice Conference Participants:

Welcome to the 1999 Annual Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education hosted by the University of Missouri-St. Louis School of Education and the Division of Continuing Education and Outreach.

In 1989, the University of Missouri-St. Louis hosted this conference for the first time. At that time, the planning committee was comprised of ten eager graduate students guided by their mentor and friend, John Henschke. Ten years later, five members of the 1989 crew have been joined by other adult education masters and doctoral students to form the 1999 planning committee. And, once again, the two of us are teaming up to bring you a valuable learning and conferencing experience. Life and its events do seem to come full circle!

The 1999 Local Planning Committee is a wonderful mix of talented students, professors and practitioners representing academia, business, technology, industry, social services and health care. Our goal is to balance voices of adult educators in a dialogue that will be exciting and provocative. Past traditions have been preserved and newer features have been added. We hope that the Graduate Student Pre-Conference, Industry Site Visits and the Town Hall Meeting will complement the quality and integrity of the thirty-nine papers that will be presented this year.

The individuals serving as keynote speakers this year are very special. Larry Berlin, a founding father of this conference, will travel from his new home in Christchurch, New Zealand to share his personal reflections as a catalyst and practitioner in our field. Sharan Merriam, University of Georgia-Athens, who also enjoys a long tradition with this conference, will share her insights at the Graduate Student Pre-Conference. Wendell Smith, University of Missouri-St. Louis, a leader in our national organizations and a strong supporter of this conference over the past eighteen years, will join us as our closing keynote speaker.

We invite you to participate in all aspects of this conference and hope that you will be inspired by the words, ideas, experiences and interactions that will spring forth from the gathering of magnificent individuals and great minds. We are honored to be your hosts at this distinguished event!

Sincerely,

Ann Austin

Ann Austin
Director of Education
SSM Rehab Hospital

John A. Henschke

John Henschke
Professor of Adult Education
University of Missouri-St. Louis

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8001 Natural Bridge Road
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an equal opportunity institution

# *Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference*

### *in Adult, Continuing and Community Education*

## Mission Statement

The conference provides a forum for practitioners and researchers to discuss practices, concepts, evaluation, and research studies in order to improve practice in Adult Education. Through such discussion and collaboration participants contribute toward the realization of a more humane and just society through lifelong learning.

Prepared on behalf of the Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference Steering Committee by Boyd Rossing.
May 28, 1991

**Eighteenth Annual**

# *Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference*
***in Adult, Continuing and Community Education***
**September 22 – 24, 1999**
**at the University of Missouri-St. Louis**

**Conference Hosts and Sponsors**

School of Education
University of Missouri-St. Louis

Continuing Education and Outreach
University of Missouri-St. Louis

**Co-Sponsors**

Missouri Association for Adult Continuing
and Community Education

American Society for Training and Development
St. Louis Chapter

## Local Conference Planning Committee

Many people have helped to make the 1999 Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing and Community Education a success. A special thanks to all of the following who served on the local conference planning committee:

Eihab Abou-Rokbah
Larry Acker
Barbara Adelman
Ann Austin
*Chair*
Lea Bengels
Ed Chang
Lora Claywell
Mary Cooper
Michelle Dorin
Gretchen Drinkard
John Henschke
ClarkHickman
Gerry Hynes
Susan Isenberg
Paulette Isaac
Connie Jeffries
Jahna Kahrhoff
Jane Kerlagon
Roxanne Miller
Hanjoo Park
Jack Perry
Elaine Sweeney
Thomas Titus
John Vernitte
Becky Walstrom
Joseph Williams
*Conference Coordinator*

# 1999 Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing and Community Education

## Steering Committee Members

Ann Austin
SSM Rehab Hospital
St. Louis, MO

Wayne Babchuk
University of Nebraska
Lincoln, NE

Charles Baker-Clark
Michigan State University
Lansing, MI

Lawrence Berlin
The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI

Cynthia Blodgett-McDeavitt
University of Nebraska
Lincoln, NE

Mary Cooper
University of Missouri
St. Louis, MO

Barbara Daley
University of Wisconsin
Milwaukee, WI

John Dirkx
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI

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Madison, Wisconsin

Trenton Ferro
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, PA

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Muncie, IN

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National-Louis University
Wheaton, IL

Peter Murk
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Lincoln, NE

Michael Spurgin
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI

David Stein
The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH

B. Allen Talbert
Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN

Thomas Titus
The Boeing Company
St. Louis, MO

John Vernitte
Rockwood School District
St. Louis, MO

# *1999 Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference*

***in Adult, Continuing and Community Education***

## *PROGRAM SCHEDULE*

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22**

**Marriott Hotel – St. Louis Airport**

**1:00 - 4:00 p.m.** **Graduate Student Pre-Conference**
Sharan Merriam
Professor of Adult and Continuing Education
University of Georgia
***Salon I – Ballroom Level***

**4:00 - 9:00 p.m.** **Registration**
***Salon E Foyer***

**3:00 - 5:00 p.m.** **Pre-Conference Site Visits**

Southwestern Bell Tele*Community* Center
*Or*
Trans World Airlines Training Center
***Meet in Hotel Registration Lobby***

**6:30 - 7:30 p.m.** **Welcoming Wine and Cheese Reception**
***Salon D – Ballroom Level***

**7:30 - 9:00 p.m.** **Town Hall Meeting**
***Salon D – Ballroom Level***

**"Plug into the 21st Century"**
Elaine Sweeney, Moderator
University of Missouri – St. Louis
School of Education

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

**Marriott Hotel – St. Louis Airport**

**7:30 - 8:00 a.m.** **Continental Breakfast**
***Salon A–C***

**8:00 - Noon** **Registration**
***Salon A Foyer***

**8:00 - 9:30 a.m.** **Opening General Session**
***Salon A–C***

**Welcome and Introductions**

Ann Austin, Conference Chair
SSM Rehab Hospital
John Henschke, Associate Professor
School of Education, Adult Education
Charles Schmitz, Dean
School of Education
Noel Koranda, Assistant Dean
Continuing Education and Outreach
Kay Gasen, Urban Program Leader
University Outreach and Extension

**Conference Keynote**

**"The Accidental Tourist"**

Larry Berlin, Professor Emeritus
Christchurch, New Zealand
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
School of Education - Adult Education
School of Social Work Human Services Continuing Education Program
Founding member of Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference

**9:45 -10:45 a.m.** **Concurrent Session I**

Susan K. Isenberg and Thomas L. Titus
The Impact of the Internet on Research-to-Practice in Adult, Continuing, Extension, and Community Education
***Garfield Room***
Joe F. Donaldson, Jessica H. Bailey, David R. Russell, and Sandra D. Pearce
An Examination of the Relevance of Doctoral Study to University Continuing Education Practitioners in the U.S.A.
***Salon I***

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23**

**Concurrent Session I – *continued***

Pat Coleman-Hoeppel
Voices of Job Loss: From Disorienting Dilemma to Perspective Transformation
***Salon F***

S. Joseph Levine and Hiro Hikawa
Self-Directed Professional Development in the Continuing Education of Adult Educators
***Salon G***

Rosemary Wolflin
Understanding Overloaded Adults' Readiness Level for Learning: McClusky's Theory of Margin Refuted
***Salon II***

David W. Frantz
On a Collision Course: Distance Education and Team Leadership Skills
***Salon III***

**11:00 a.m. - Noon** **Concurrent Session II**

Lea Bengels
Creating Effective Non-Profit Volunteer Training Programs by Utilizing Adult Education Principles
***Garfield***

Randee Lipson Lawrence
Transcending Boundaries: Building Community Through Residential Adult Learning
***Salon I***

Simone Conceicao-Runlee and Kathleen A. Reilly
Experiences of Faculty Members who Interact with Students in an Online Environment
***Salon F***

Tonette S. Rocco and Michael L. Rowland
A Piece of the Puzzle: John Ohliger, "Music Director" of Basic Choices
***Salon G***

Randal D. Ice and Robert E. Nolan
Federalization of Adult Education in Oklahoma under Governor "Alfalfa" Bill Murray, 1933-1941
***Salon II***

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23**

**12:15 - 1:30 p.m.** **Luncheon**
***Salon A-C***

**Presentation of the 1999 *Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference* Graduate Student Research Paper Award**

*Welcome* John Henschke, Associate Professor of Education
University of Missouri-St. Louis

*Presenter* James McElhinney, Professor of Education
Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

**1:45 - 2:45 p.m.** **Concurrent Session III**

Nadira K. Charaniya and Jane West Walsh
Children of Abraham Sit Down Together to Learn: Initiating Interreligious Learning with Muslims and Jews
***Garfield***

Barbara Adelman
Program Effectiveness Evaluation: Recertification and Job Upgrading for Adult Refugees (Non-Native Speakers of English)
***Salon I***

Barbara J. Daley
An Exploration of Electronic Discussion as an Adult Learning Strategy
***Salon F***

David Stein
Participation in Community Religious Adult Education and Its Relationship to Spirituality and Religious Observance
***Salon G***

Trenton Ferro
Multiple Intelligences and Adult Learning: A Review of the Literature
***Salon II***

Dele Braimoh and Rebecca Lekoko
Empowering Women for Development Through Regionally Planned Community Education Strategies: A Southern African Perspective
***Salon III***

**3:00 - 4:00 p.m.** **Concurrent Session IV**

Thomas Flynn and Denise Davis
Improving the Reading and Writing Skills of Deaf Adult Learners: Lessons from a Deaf Learning Community
***Garfield***

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

**Concurrent Session IV** ***–continued***

Roxanne T. Miller
The Adult Education Implications of 'Work-First' Welfare Reform Policy on Welfare Recipients: A Theoretical Approach
***Salon I***

John M. Dirkx, Marilyn Amey, and Lisa Haston
Context in the Contextualized Curriculum: Adult Life Worlds as Unitary or Multiplistic?
***Salon F***

Elizabeth J. Tisdell
Women "Teaching Across Borders" for Social Change in Adult Education: The Interconnecting Role of Culture and Spirituality
***Salon G***

Rama Radhakrishna, Bob Spalding, and Sherry Smith
Framework to Identify In-Service Education Needs of Extension Practitioners
***Salon II***

Michael L. Rowland
Music in Adult Education: A Review of the Literature
***Salon III***

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|---|---|
| **4:45 p.m.** | **Boarding of Buses and Cars for Dinner at Anheuser-Busch**<br>***Ballroom Lobby Exit*** |
| **5:30 - 6:00 p.m.** | **Arrival at Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company** |
| **6:00 - 8:30 p.m.** | **Dinner Party and Learning Center Tours**<br>***Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company*** |
| **8:30 p.m.** | **Departure of Buses and Cars from Anheuser-Busch**<br>***Return to Marriott Hotel Lobby*** |

## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

**Marriott Hotel – St. Louis Airport**

| | |
|---|---|
| **7:00 - 8:15 a.m.** | **Steering Committee Meeting**<br>***Salon I*** |
| **7:30 - 8:30 a.m.** | **Continental Breakfast**<br>***Ballroom Foyer*** |

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24**

**8:30 - 9:30 a.m.** **Concurrent Session V**

Susan Hayes Droegemueller
  Learning Styles: Problem or Promise?
  ***Garfield***
Larry G. Martin and Mernathan Sykes
  Urban Workforce Development: A Collaborative Planning Framework for Improving Basic Skills
  ***Salon I***
Clare Dvoranchik Klunk
  Professionals' Workplace Devaluation: Implications for the Workplace
  ***Salon F***
Tonette S. Rocco
  "Aren't you glad you're not stupid?" The Experiences of Adult Students with Invisible Disabilities and Higher Education
  ***Salon G***
Kathy Magnuson
  Exploring the Theory and Practice of Feminist Business
  ***Salon III***

**9:45 - 10:45 a.m.** **Concurrent Session VI**

Sharon K. Gibson
  Mentoring and Women's Adult Development: Implications for Female Faculty
  ***Garfield***
Edward W. Taylor
  A Critical Review of Teaching Belief Research: Implications for Adult Education
  ***Salon I***
Olga Kritskaya and John M. Dirkx
  Symbolic Representations as Mediators for Meaning Construction: An Exploration of Transformative Pedagogy within a Professional Development Context
  ***Salon F***
Murari Suvedi and Maria Knight Lapinski
  Expanding Educational Programs: Assessing Business and Community Members' Needs and Support for Community Education
  ***Salon G***
Andrea L. Beach and Jessica T. Kovan
  Rethinking the Linkages Between Higher and Adult Education: Implications for Graduate Education
  ***Salon II***

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24**
**Concurrent Session VI –*continued***

Jayne Vande Merkt
A Multi-site Case Study Examining Mentoring Practices: Design and Implications for Practice
***Salon III***

**11:00 a.m. - Noon** **Concurrent Session VII**

Gale Kamen, Fran Kassinger and Linda Eanes Jefferson
Dance to Learn: Reaffirmation of Cultural Rituals in Instructing Adult Learners in Formal Settings
***Garfield***

Barbara J. Daley and Merryl Carlsson
Learning and Context: Connections in Continuing Professional Education
***Salon F***

Michael Rowland
Adult Learning Through Religious Music in an African American Church Choir
***Salon G***

Robert E. Nolan
ESL Program Evaluation: Lessons from Outside the U.S.
***Salon II***

Regina Curry, Shu-chuan Liao, Gerri Outlaw, and Jan Woodhouse
"Goin' Down the Road": Learning at the Edge of Social Movements for Cultural and Ecological Sustainability
***Salon III***

**12:15 - 1:45 p.m.** **Luncheon**
***Salon E***

**"Research Needs in Distance Learning"**

Wendell Smith
Interim Vice Chancellor for University Relations
University of Missouri - St. Louis

**1:45 p.m.** **Invitation of Midwest Research-To-Practice Conference 2000**
Michelle Dudka, Chair, Local Planning Committee
University of Wisconsin - Madison

**2:00 p.m.** **Farewell**

**2000 Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference**
**University of Wisconsin - Madison**
**September 27 – 29, 2000**

**Conference At-A-Glance**

| | Garfield | Salon I | Salon F | Salon G | Salon II | Salon III |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Practitioner Concerns | Practitioner Concerns | Reports on Research | Reports on Research | Reports on Research | |
| **Thursday<br>9:45 – 10:45 a.m.<br>Concurrent Session I** | **Isenberg & Titus**<br>The Impact of the Internet on Research-to-Practice in Adult, Continuing, Extension… | **Donaldson, Bailey, Russell & Pearce**<br>An Examination of the Relevance of Doctoral Study to University Continuing… | **Coleman-Hoeppel**<br>Voices of Job Loss: From Disorienting Dilemma to Perspective Transformation | **Levine & Hikawa**<br>Self-Directed Professional Development in the Continuing Education of Adult Educators | **Wolflin**<br>Understanding Overloaded Adults' Readiness Level for Learning: McClusky's Theory ... | **Frantz**<br>On A Collision Course: Distance Education and Team Leadership Skills |
| | Practitioner Concerns | Reports on Research | Reports on Research | Reports on Research | Reports on Research | Research Issues |
| **Thursday<br>11:00 a.m. - Noon<br>Concurrent Session II** | **Bengels**<br>Creating Effective Non-Profit Volunteer Training Programs by Utilizing Adult Education Principles | **Lipson Lawrence**<br>Transcending Boundaries: Building Community Through Residential Adult Learning | **Conceicao-Runlee & Reilly**<br>Experiences of Faculty Members who Interact with Students in an Online … | **Rocco & Rowland**<br>A Piece of the Puzzle: John Ohliger, "Music Director" of Basic Choices | **Ice & Nolan**<br>Federalization of Adult Education in Oklahoma under Governor "Alfalfa" Bill Murray… | |
| | Practitioner Concerns | Evaluation Studies | Reports on Research | Reports on Research | Research Issues | Practitioner Concerns |
| **Thursday<br>1:45 – 2:45 p.m.<br>Concurrent Session III** | **Charaniya & Walsh**<br>Children of Abraham Sit Down Together to Learn: Initiating Interreligious Learning with Muslims and Jews | **Adelman**<br>Program Effectiveness Evaluation: Recertification and Job Upgrading for Adult Refugees (Non-Native Speakers of English) | **Daley**<br>An Exploration of Electronic Discussion as an Adult Learning Strategy | **Stein**<br>Participation in Community Religious Adult Education and Its Relationship to Spirituality and Religious Observance | **Ferro**<br>Multiple Intelligences and Adult Learning: A Review of the Literature | **Braimoh & Lekoko**<br>Empowering Women for Development Through Regionally Planned Community Education Strategies: A Southern African Perspective |
| | Practitioner Concerns | Research Issues | Reports on Research | Reports on Research | Evaluation Studies | Reports on Research |
| **Thursday<br>3:00 – 4:00 p.m.<br>Concurrent Session IV** | **Flynn & Davis**<br>Improving the Reading and Writing Skills of Deaf Adult Learners: Lessons from a Deaf Learning Community | **Miller**<br>The Adult Education Implications of 'Work First' Welfare Reform Policy on Welfare Recipients: A Theoretical Approach | **Dirkx, Amey & Haston**<br>Context in the Contextualized Curriculum: Adult Life Worlds as Unitary or Multiplistic? | **Tisdell**<br>Women "Teaching Across Borders" for Social Change in Adult Education: The Interconnecting Role of Culture and Spirituality | **Radhakrishna, Spalding & Smith**<br>Framework to Identify In-Service Education Needs of Extension Practitioners | **Rowland**<br>Music in Adult Education: A Review of the Literature |

| | Garfield | Salon I | Salon F | Salon G | Salon II | Salon III |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Practitioner Concerns | Practitioner Concerns | Reports on Research | Reports on Research | | Research Issues |
| **Friday<br>8:30 – 9:30 a.m.<br>Concurrent Session V** | **Droegemueller**<br>Learning Styles: Problem or Promise? | **Martin & Sykes**<br>Urban Workforce Development: A Collaborative Planning Framework for Improving Basic Skills | **Dvoranchik Klunk**<br>Professionals' Workplace Devaluation: Implications for the Workplace | **Rocco**<br>"Aren't you glad you're not stupid?" The Experiences of Adult Students with Invisible Disabilities and Higher Education | | **Magnuson**<br>Exploring the Theory and Practice of Feminist Business |
| | Practitioner Concerns | Practitioner Concerns | Reports on Research | Evaluation Studies | Research Issues | Reports on Research |
| **Friday<br>9:45 – 10:45 a.m.<br>Concurrent Session VI** | **Gibson**<br>Mentoring and Women's Adult Development: Implications for Female Faculty | **Taylor**<br>A Critical Review of Teaching Belief Research: Implications for Adult Education | **Kritskaya & Dirkx**<br>Symbolic Representations as Mediators for Meaning Construction: An Exploration of Transformative Pedagogy within a Professional Development Context | **Suvedi & Lapinski**<br>Expanding Educational Programs: Assessing Business and Community Members' Needs and Support for Community Education | **Beach & Kovan**<br>Rethinking the Linkages Between Higher and Adult Education: Implications for Graduate Education | **Vande Merkt**<br>A Multi-site Case Study Examining Mentoring Practices: Design and Implications for Practice |
| | Practitioner Concerns | | Reports on Research | Research Issues | Evaluation Studies | Practitioner Concerns |
| **Friday<br>11:00 a.m. – Noon<br>Concurrent Session VII** | **Kamen, Kassinger & Jefferson**<br>Dance to Learn: Reaffirmation of Cultural Rituals in Instructing Adult … | | **Daley & Carlsson**<br>Learning and Context: Connections in Continuing Professional Education | **Rowland**<br>Adult Learning Through Religious Music in an African American Church Choir | **Nolan**<br>ESL Program Evaluation: Lessons from Outside the U.S. | **Curry, Liao, Outlaw & Woodhouse**<br>"Goin' Down the Road": Learning at the Edge of Social … Sustainability |

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# Program Effectiveness Evaluation: Recertification and Job Upgrading for Adult Refugees (Non-Native Speakers of English)

Barbara Adelman

## I. Abstract

This evaluation examines a pilot program which combined adult education principles with employment skills for an adult refugee population. The project developed procedures, curriculum and resources that were effective for many individual refugees, but was unable to flourish within the institutional structure it was conceived.

## II. Purpose of the Evaluation and a Brief Background to Problems in Refugee Resettlement and Employment

For years, early employment of refugees has responded to a Federal mandate to achieve economic self-sufficiency as soon after resettlement as possible. In addition to the government's pressure to stay off welfare and support their families quickly, refugees are often unprepared emotionally, economically, and linguistically to enter the U.S. job market.

The recent emphasis on reducing welfare dependency has put even more pressure on service providers to place refugees in jobs rapidly. Traditionally, job placement departments within resettlement programs have looked for manufacturing sites, hotels, or maintenance operations where large numbers of refugees can be placed, often with one or two refugees acting as translators. Job counselors work with groups of refugees, screening them superficially for this first job. During this process, little or no attention is given to matching individual refugees with their previous professional or skilled work, thus incurring a wastage of human capital and training. Refugees who return for a second or third placement will receive services, but usually for one year as the service provider is busy with the next group of arriving refugees.

The St. Louis-based International Institute, responded to this problem by developing a pilot program model that integrated Adult Education principles and techniques with a more thorough examination of skills at intake, assistance in recredentialing, job upgrading, an orientation to the U.S. job market and systems, and English for Special Purposes (ESP) if needed.

STAR (Special Targeted Assistance to Refugees) was a first-of-its-kind project, and it met its objectives. However, its mandate was not renewed as originally conceived; and it now exists in separate departments of the Institute. This evaluation will clarify the changes the model underwent during the project period and the reasons for its now fragmented state.

## III. Value to Adult Education of the Recertification and Job Upgrading Project

In the original proposal to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and the year-end reports of the Special Targeted Assistance to Refugees (STAR), the overall goal of the project was: Job skill recertification/job upgrading for refugee adults with 12+ years of education. The rationale was that professional refugees bring to the U.S. life experience, previous training, and education that can be utilized for employment in or near their original careers. The projected impact for the individual would be more job satisfaction, higher pay and ultimately increased self-esteem and status recovery. The projected impact for the community would be early models of success and possibly neighborhood stability.

### A. Model's Objectives and Outcomes

The specific objectives stated in the reports and the outcomes are as follows:

**Objective 1:** *Identify and recruit qualified refugees for recertification, job upgrading, and career counseling.* Recruitment and enrollment outcomes: The final report shows that over a period of 2 ½ years, STAR enrolled 345 clients and made 205 upgraded placements. At enrollment, job counselors interviewed clients individually and kept detailed records which were later placed in a data base for all staff to use. These data were collected even if the client did not ultimately qualify for the program. Client qualifications were: to be a refugee, to be currently working, and to have documentation of 12+ years of education.

**Objective 2:** *Provide ESL, cultural orientation (U.S. and work site specific) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP).* Orientation and ESL outcomes: Job counselors and clients agreed on a contract that clarified the responsibilities of each party. Counselors and clients worked together to develop an individual job plan.

Clients were ESL tested. Those needing tutoring signed a study contract. Table 1 indicates the hours of the English-as-a-second language and English for special purposes per client.

Table 1: Hours of ESL/ESP per client

| Hours of instruction | 1-12 | 13-24 | 26-37 | 38-50 | 51-75 | 76-100 | 100-125 | 126-250 | 250 + | Total clients served |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # of clients | 119 | 49 | 20 | 9 | 11 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 225 |

A comparison of the job placement list and the list of clients with ESP hours indicates that only 56 clients were placed without ESP contact. Of those receiving 50+ hours, all but 3 attained higher employment or jobs closer to their original professions.

**Objective 3:** *Place project participants pursuing recertification in interim jobs more closely related to prior employment, or on career track.* Placement outcomes: In the over view of STAR final report it states: "A total of $531,960 was spent over the two and a half years of the project with the result of 205 placements at a per capita placement cost of $2,595—a highly competitive cost when considering the intensity of services necessary for success. Since each placement resulted in an average salary increase of $2 to $3 per hour (approximately $4000 to $6000 annually in gross pay), then each participant's placement cost was approximately 40 to 65% of the first year's pay increase only." Table 2 shows these data :

Table 2: Average STAR salaries compared with regular placement salaries

| Year | STAR male | Institute averages | Difference | STAR female | Institute averages | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1997/98 | $10.05 | $6.65 | $3.40 | $9.19 | $6.65 | $2.44 |

**Objective 4:** *Graduate 80% of participants from recertification preparation/career track preparation, prepare 20% of participants to apply for appropriate skills recertification exam/*

*undertake individual small business initiative.* Outcomes of skills recertification process: When clients had professional qualifications, they were referred to the project manager, their documents were translated and reviewed. If necessary, documents were evaluated by a professional evaluation service: teachers, doctors, nurses particularly needed this service.

STAR referred 61 clients to other institutions and assisted with entry and course choice. Engineers, for example, advised to take AUTOCAD courses at the Community Colleges, practiced on a STAR-prepared computer at the Institute. At the end of the project, 47 clients were still in progress, the rest had completed their programs, and 11 were working in their fields. Two had opened their own businesses.

Eighteen clients took and passed exams that allowed them entry into higher performance and higher-paying positions. Most were in the medical support area, e.g., phlebotomy, insulin administration. One student passed the foreign medical student exam.

All staff members contributed to the information regarding recertfication requirements. The manager kept all these data in a computer file and collected any pertinent paper work, manuals, and applications. These data have been shared with other US resettlement agencies.

**Objective 5:** *Develop network of community resources to facilitate program activities.* Community resources outcomes: As job counselors searched for and matched jobs with individuals' skills, the manager kept a computer file on possible employers and placements. As a result, the Institute increased its employer list, elected a trade union executive as a board member, identified new employment sites, and added contributors to the building campaign.

### B. Organization of the Original Project Model

STAR proposed a process in which an interdepartmental team within the International Institute would work with a selection of qualified adult refugees, based on their background knowledge, and would provide a program of concentrated orientation to job search skills and ESL to enable refugees independently to seek positions in their own fields. As the project was developed within an already functioning resettlement agency, the senior staff organized the project and planned to hire two new job counselors and two new ESL instructors. Although two human service positions were created, no specific case workers were assigned to the project because the client base was multilingual, which meant many different languages were needed for recruiting, translations, and counseling services.

### C. Planning and Implementation of the Project Model

As soon as the contract was awarded, the STAR director--who was also the Education Director, the manager--the human services director and the job coordinator began meeting together. These meetings later evolved into weekly interdepartmental 1-2 hour sessions for formative evaluation. Initially, there was a basic division of labor with human services responsible for recruitment, document translation, and counseling not relating to employment; the ESL department responsible for language testing and language tutoring and referral; the job placement department responsible for collection of data related to client job experience, researching possible employment matches, and placement. The manager was responsible for data control and research into materials and recredentialing procedures.

### D. The Model in Practice

All staff did initial intake, after which the potential participants were reviewed at the weekly staff meetings to verify their meeting the agreed-upon three-point criteria: refugee status, 12+ years of documented education, and current employment reflecting a US work history. Each staff group worked with the manager to create information collection documents that would capture reporting information and that would be staff- and client-friendly; for example: the job and ESL staffs prepared contracts that explained the client role and the staff role. These had to be agreed upon and signed by both client and service provider.

The recruitment initially was done by all STAR-staff using the regular staff for referrals and an education department print-out of ESL enrollment from the five preceding years in order to find qualified individuals. After getting a base of clients, recruitment fell more to the case workers, who in their regular daily intake could identify potential clients and advise them of the project, which clients could enter after getting a first job. However, in the second year, the job counselors were the primary source of new clients. Case workers only did translations.

### E. Formative Evaluation Changes

In the weekly meetings, the staff began to discuss areas where problems were occurring and to explore ways to correct them. It soon became clear that clients, even though they were in the workplace, were unfamiliar with US cultural processes of job search and retention. This made it extremely difficult for them to work independently toward their goals. Therefore, the client base was surveyed to find critical areas of need. While most clients could prioritize their needs, STAR found that opinion surveys were not clearly understood and that counselors could not assume client knowledge of many US organizational systems. After a particularly unsuccessful client-employer interview, staff agreed that job counselors had neither the time nor the communicative skills to counsel, practice, and test all the clients on the STAR list. Consequently, the project manager developed a series of workshops that combined ESL and adult education techniques with the content of job search.

**1. Workshops:** A series of five workshops was developed to meet the expressed needs of the clients. Adult education principles were used in conjunction with ESL techniques.

a.. *Accessibility and climate setting:* After trying various schedules, STAR staff found that Saturday afternoons and Monday nights were most convenient for clients. Sessions were held on familiar ground at the Institute site. Staff members adjusted their schedules to the clients'.

b. *Immediate need and applicability:* Content was based on what clients felt they needed most to get a job in their fields of expertise: resume and cover letter preparation, interviewing skills, sources for jobs, and research into other employment issues.

c. *Use of past knowledge:* Each session began with clients' defining the issue as they knew it or related to it in their own country. Resumes, for example, are five to six page vitae in the former Yugoslavia, and business correspondence is transmitted in blue envelopes. Clients with more work experience in the US were encouraged to share their experiences.

d. *Individual interest product and reflection:* Each session ended with a product that pertained directly to the client's job or career goal–either a resume, cover letter, practice interview, or practice with research materials that would lead him/her to employment directly related to previous skills and training. Finally, clients completed reflective evaluation forms.

e. *Group support and cooperation:* Groups worked together on problems: Given an example of a good and bad interview, groups had to articulate what worked well and why, what didn't and why. Clients would offer help and suggestions to others.

f. *Immediate application of new skills and participation:* Class discussion led to the development of questions that clients felt were pertinent in an interview. The instructor would add critical material. Clients then developed their own responses, practiced them with each other, and later went through a videotaped mock interview.

g.. *Reflection:* Clients had the option of critiquing their interview with the job counselor or with the group. Most chose working with the group and were quick to evaluate their own performances. Clients examined different cultural expectations on each workshop topic.

h. *Individual interests and participation:* While clients were introduced to materials for job search and research, they investigated their own areas of expertise. Locations for jobs were directly related to where a client lived. Transportation problems were addressed and possible solutions worked out.

i. *Reflection:* Clients were asked for suggested changes to the workshop materials for use in the next cycle.

j. *ESL techniques employed included:* visuals for clarification; real materials (e.g., computers); controlled teacher language; native language use during group work. Clients previewed items to be covered at the beginning of the session and summarized what had been done at the end.

**2. Other issues**: Contacting and maintaining contact with clients became a problem. Most of the clients worked the same hours as the staff. While this was anticipated by the ESL staff who were hired with the expectation of meeting clients in the evenings and on Saturdays, job counselors and case workers were not prepared for a flexible schedule. Special arrangements had to be made in advance for case worker counseling. The job coordinator ignored the evening-weekend scheduling issue, which became more critical as the program progressed.

Job counselors and ESL instructors realized that clients were not fulfilling their part of the contracts, so contracts were translated into five major languages. Letters and appointment correspondence were also changed to bilingual format.

Staff minutes show that the process of document translation had not been adequately addressed because case workers were receiving documents from many sources. Documents were misplaced. The manager centralized the process by having all documents recorded by her and then sent to case workers for verification of authenticity and then, if necessary, for translation.

Although the project was enrolling clients, the target numbers for identification and recruitment had to be adjusted downward because of job placement staff turnover. Only in the second year was a job counselor hired who stayed with the project for more than 120 days.

In tutoring sessions, the clients were slow to take responsibility for their own learning. Although tapes and homework were individually developed for clients, clients would often come to tutoring sessions unprepared. Summative evaluation indicated that a more timely process for moving tutees through the training would have improved the ESL program and permitted more clients access to individual and language-specific training.

### F. Staff and Client Evaluation of the Model

Formative evaluation from staff minutes indicates STAR staffing problems in the job placement department occurred from the beginning. The job coordinator hired only one counselor in the first quarter, a pattern that would continue throughout the project, which was without full job staff during 12 of the 30 months. Overall, 8 different persons filled the two job counselor positions. This created delays in becoming familiar with and working on clients' cases. Interviews with clients indicated this lack of continuity created confusion for clients as well. One experienced senior staff member moved out of state after the first year. The ESL staff also had turnover although there was always overlap; therefore, peer training was possible for continuity.

Summative data from the staff survey (a Likert Scale of 1-5, 5 being the highest), indicated an average rating of 3.5 in the areas of project administration, Institute awareness and cooperation, job placement, ESL; personal involvement rated 4; and perceived client involvement, 3. The strongest area was data collection (4.8); the weakest were interdepartmental success (2.9) and the use of computer classes related to job upgrades (2.7).

Internal lines of communication were tenuous from the beginning. In the staff survey both the CEO and the project director expressed dissatisfaction with their relationship and communication over the project. The director expressed severe criticism of the job coordinator and his hiring and staffing processes. The director also said the focus on independence and self-sufficiency of the client emphasized in the grant was in conflict with the need for expedient job placement. By the second year, staff minutes show the Job Coordinator no longer attended weekly interdepartmental meetings. Case workers did little recruiting, and STAR translations were considered extra work and needed constant monitoring.

Qualitative data from client interviews ranged widely depending on the individual's outcome in obtaining improved employment or career development services. Overall, clients whose English level was high, or who fit the profile of the good language learner, felt STAR had been of value. They mentioned higher job satisfaction and personal pleasure at being selected to participate. They also addressed how initial confusion and depression were alleviated by the career and educational counseling process. Many expressed gratitude for tools learned in workshops and pride in being able to find their own jobs. At the other end of the scale, some clients felt that STAR had not helped them. The major complaint was that STAR had not found them a better job and that the job counselors made promises they could not keep. Another frustration was the inability to get into the ESL tutoring sessions, even though they were referred to regular ESL classes.

## IV. Conclusions

The quantitative data show that the project was successful for professionals, especially those with moderate to good linguistic skills, and that adult education techniques could be applied effectively to an employment orientation curriculum. For refugees with lower communications skills, additional occupational counseling might also have resulted in job upgrading; but this service was unavailable because of the frequent turnover and repeated vacancies in the job placement counseling staff.

The qualitative data suggest that while staff members were working to provide services, senior supervisors were quarreling over turf. The new organizational system has a job upgrade counselor working outside the regular job placement department and reporting to a new supervisor. An entrepreneurial program has been created in a new community links department. Recredentialing and job orientation are in the ESL department. The Secretary (of Labor's) Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) Report, which affects the ESL curriculum, requires more emphasis on job-readiness skills. STAR workshop materials have proven to be a solid base for SCANS-related classroom activities.

Beyond the intra-institutional bickering, STAR results reveal an even more basic conflict between short- and long-term governmental goals for refugees: short-term, the objective is to close cases; long-term, the objective is to create self-directed, life-long learners.

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## Rethinking the Linkages Between Higher and Adult Education: Implications for Graduate Education

Andrea L. Beach and Jessica T. Kovan

### Abstract

Graduate study in adult and higher education serves to prepare the leaders of the fields. As the contexts within which higher and adult education (as activities and as fields of study) grow increasingly complex, graduate education must follow suit. This paper discusses the trend toward merged graduate programs and their potential impact on the fields and proposes research and practice issues involved with and arising from merged programs.

### Introduction

In 1989, the Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education (HALE) doctoral program was established at Michigan State University. This program was representative of a national trend to merge freestanding programs into departments with a wider focus. In 1985, for example, 49% of doctoral programs in higher education were found to be in the process of merging with another unit, had recently done so, or were expected to do so in the near future (Adams, 1991). Correspondingly, most adult education departments were linked, in some form, with one or more other programs or specialty areas within larger departments (Peters & Kreitlow, 1991). Since that time, the shifting demographics and educational demands of society, as well as the shrinking financial support for both higher and adult education, have made the contexts within which education takes place increasingly complex, intertwined, and interdependent. Little research and writing has addressed the consequences of mergers on the preparation of graduate students to be "practitioners of leadership and scholars for the field of study" (Murrell & Davis, 1991, p. 103).

In what follows, we focus on the merging of adult and higher education graduate programs and the implications of those mergers on the leadership of adult and higher education as we enter the 21st century. We first concentrate on the historical events which have brought these two fields together. We then raise a number of research issues regarding the philosophical and practice differences of adult and higher education. Our purpose for this discussion is to present issues missing from the literature regarding the future of graduate education. This is of utmost importance as graduate students are being prepared for educational contexts of today and the future. Programs that have integrated – for expediency or for other reasons – have the potential to be on the cutting edge of educational leadership, and to serve as models for other programs.

### The Trend Toward Mergers

The landscape of higher and adult education practice has changed rapidly over the last twenty years, as has the landscape of graduate study in both of these fields. During the 1980's, higher and adult education authors noted the trend toward merging graduate programs. Fiscal demands necessitated that higher and adult education programs merge with each other and other fields in order to survive. Terms such as "forced marriage" and "takeovers" were common metaphors used to describe these changes (Adams, 1991). Adams wrote that "the small, selective, well-financed, and highly productive program in higher education had become so rare by 1990 as to be anachronistic" (p. 39). He noted that mergers and consolidations became the main activity of the 1980's. The purpose of graduate study in higher education, as well as the means, also shifted. The image of the department of higher education focused on theoretical research and educating full-time graduate students gave way to a new reality. By 1991, 70% of graduate students in higher education programs were part-time and ". . . the trend . . . [was] inexorably toward greater emphasis on training practitioners in educational administration – regardless of the title given the newly spawned unit" (Adams, 1991, p.44).

Adult educators noted similar movement in their programs. In 1982, Darkenwald and Merriam encouraged adult educators to "abandon their intellectual isolation" (p. 231) and to work to develop the field through involvement in mainstream organizations. Peters and Kreitlow (1991) report that since the early 1960s, there has been tremendous growth in the number of adult education graduate programs, yet they also found that the connections those programs had with other fields expanded. They identified thirty-nine different names of departments, divisions, centers, and units that housed adult education graduate programs. Students of these programs increasingly came from more diverse educational and work backgrounds. The focus of adult education graduate programs also focused on the preparation of leaders and administrators for the field. While the field expanded its knowledge base and research methods, as well as its student base, those watching the changes were concerned with the potential loss of autonomy and program control, as mergers with other fields continued (Peters & Kreitlow, 1991).

In the decade since Adams and Peters and Kreitlow reviewed the status of graduate programs, few authors have looked at how programs are adjusting to mergers or using them as resources to advance the fields. Peterson and Provo's (1996) case study of the integration of an adult education and human resource development department is a notable exception. They presented a framework for conceptualizing their merged program that allowed for the faculty and graduate students to benefit from the overlap in the fields while maintaining the integrity of both. Their conceptual framework has influenced our thinking about how to approach research and practice issues in the integration of adult and higher education programs.

It is unlikely that the trend toward the merging of graduate programs will reverse itself anytime soon, or that programs will "un-merge." That being the case, how can graduate programs integrating adult education and higher education use their situations to the best advantage and serve as models for the fields? What are the key connections and differences between the two and how can they be explored and "nudged" to create new understanding?

As Kett (1994) has observed, the history of adult education offers opportunities for examining evolving American conceptions of education itself. It reveals a great deal about what Americans have thought constituted the process of education. It also reveals insight into underlying philosophical differences between the two fields.

## Philosophies and Boundaries

There is an increasing call for "integrative systems" in education. Singleton, Hirsch, and Burack (1999) write that as colleges and universities develop more complex relationships with society, they can benefit from an integrated approach that underscores the connections rather than the divisions in their institutions. Yet, integration implies the blurring of boundaries. With this blurring comes contention regarding issues of identity and philosophy.

Senge (1990) writes that "[o]ne is hard pressed to think of any organization that has sustained some measure of greatness in the absence of goals, values, and missions that become deeply shared throughout the organization" (p. 9). Because the very definitions of adult and higher education have been repeatedly disputed by scholars within the fields, the development of a common deeply shared mission for integrated programs seems illusory. The integration of the two fields within a single graduate program implies building upon the strengths of each. Feelings of threatened identity were shared by adult and higher education programs involved in mergers (Adams, 1991; Peters & Kreitlow, 1991; Peterson & Provo, 1996). Concerns over allocation of resources, faculty roles, and program quality also abounded. Adams stresses,

> Where the new or redefined mission is perceived to be a distortion of scholarly and academic values, there has been anger, tension, lowered morale, and obscenities. In such places, a sense of loss of autonomy and integrity have resulted in a perceived loss of identity, even where the numbers reveal no such loss. (p. 44-45)

These strong feelings imply the need to manage philosophical and organizational boundaries. Questions arise regarding how to "best" manage the merging. Best for whom? Who's interests, who's values? Merged programs are in a unique position to explore larger questions of disciplinary identity and boundaries, as well as build models of management for others. Building on the strengths of both fields requires exploration of those strengths. Adams' (1991) study did not find significant integration of programs in terms of curricula or shifts in philosophies. Curricular studies at that time and after (Fife, 1991; Harrison, 1995) showed very little overlap in higher and adult education topics across the country. Rather than integration, parallel programs within one unit appeared to evolve. Programs willing to approach integration have the opportunity to push research and practice forward for both fields.

## Research and Practice

Both higher education and adult education can be described as processes, as well as academic fields of study. How programs define the two will shape their research and practice focus, and possibly their willingness to integrate. If the two are seen as processes that share some elements common to all educational enterprises and other elements unique to their missions, linkages can be explored and knowledge bases shared. A number of research-to-practice and practice-oriented research issues emerge which can potentially help both fields better situate themselves in the changing educational landscape and strengthen the areas of practice and research they share. This can be seen in the example of the area of teaching and learning.

Teaching and learning are at the heart of both adult education and higher education. What are the similarities and differences between adult learning theories and the teaching and learning strategies attendant with them and the student-centered learning strategies espoused by post-secondary education scholars? Can they be discussed and jointly researched in a way that helps educators understand the continuum of learning throughout life and the best ways to facilitate that learning? To what extent does and can the accumulated knowledge about teaching and learning in both fields inform the research and practice of the other?

In thinking about research and practice, and teaching and learning, who are the participants of higher education? Or of adult education? Adult education has a vast literature exploring issues of participation, and higher education literature is concerned with issues of access, retention, and certification. Books discussing how to make higher education settings more adult-student friendly

(Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989; Millard, 1991) have reminded higher education institutions that their student base is changing, and that their services must also change. To what extent are issues of participation, recruitment, retention, and student affairs shared between higher and adult education, and what does the future hold? In this same context, how do questions of "education for whom," "why do we educate," and "who pays for the education" get sorted out and answered? These questions are by no means new or unexplored. What makes them interesting is the increased complexity of education and the potential for research

Faced with shrinking funding from federal and state governments, higher education institutions are seeking more creative funding sources. Adult education as an activity is also taking place in more creative places and ways, and adult educators are connected with numerous diverse sponsoring agencies. Both are partnering with business and industry to provide education and conduct research (Johnstone, 1994). How can the lessons both have learned be shared to make this kind of relationship a productive one for students, educators, and partners?

## Graduate Education

Despite the call for attention to the changing needs of an expanded group of students served by higher education (Schlossberg et al, 1991; Anderson & Swazey, 1998), we could find few articles outlining curricular changes needed in graduate education to address those changes. Nor were we able to find any presentation of curriculum on the level of Peterson and Provo's (1996) case study from the higher and adult education programs that integrated in the 1980's.

Have the "forced marriages" of the 1980's yielded healthy curricular children? Have integrated departments developed integrated curricula? How do the curricula of higher and adult education graduate programs reflect an understanding of the changing nature of higher and adult education? How much are combined programs addressing the spectrum of theory, research, and practice issues of their fields? Curricular studies in the fields (e.g., Fife, 1991; Harrison, 1995) have cataloged the course titles of programs around the country, but have not delved into these questions. Studies that examine the actual content offered in courses and the philosophical rationale behind the content could help educators better assess the nature of graduate study and possible gaps in program curricula.

Adams (1991) and Peters and Kreitlow (1991) noted that no one really knows how good a job faculty do or of what value graduate education is to their students. We were unable to locate any recent studies examining who the graduates of higher and adult education programs are and where they are working. Do graduates of combined programs differ in their practice than those from autonomous programs? Difficult and expensive as follow-up studies of graduates are, they can yield critical insight into where programs need to move for the future. The contexts within which graduates work and the issues they face can be important catalysts for program change and future research. A systems approach to graduate education requires this kind of feedback in order to build the shared understanding of what graduate education should be.

Curriculum building (and program integration, for that matter) is infused with power issues. Adult education scholars stress the importance of focusing on the relationship between the cultural, social, economic, and political systems in society in planning adult education programs (Cervero & Wilson, 1994). These approaches and considerations can and should be turned inward by those working in integrated graduate programs to examine the training of the fields' own practitioners and leaders.

## Conclusion

Doctoral programs that train practitioners and scholars of higher and adult education help shape the future of both fields. These future leaders and scholars will work in contexts their educators and mentors cannot foresee. In 1982, Darkenwald and Merriam noted that adult education was being shaped by a swirl of events not totally predictable or controllable. The same can be said in 1999. Are future leaders being adequately prepared to serve the changing nature of all education? As the contexts within which higher and adult education (as activities and as fields of study) grow increasingly complex, intertwined, and interdependent, graduate education of leaders for the fields must follow suit. A systems approach is needed, in which historical, philosophical, and practice differences are taken into consideration, explored, and discussed. We have come to the time when the old models that fragment and segment education do not work or do not apply. Likewise, parallel programs in merged departments miss out on the rich resources available from both fields. New models including systems thinking, collaboration, and integration are necessary, and programs that integrate their graduate curricula can lead the way.

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# CREATING EFFECTIVE NON-PROFIT VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAMS BY UTILIZING ADULT EDUCATION PRINCIPLES

**Lea Bengels**

## Abstract

The application of adult education principles (andragogy) can enhance the effectiveness of volunteer training programs and can expand the field of adult education by encouraging the creation of effective learning environments for the thousands of adults who participate in volunteer activities. This paper explores the field of volunteer management, recognizes the role of volunteer managers as adult educators and encourages the use of andragogy to improve volunteer training activities.

## 1. Description of the Concern

A larger proportion of the adult population is involved in community service activities today than at any time in history. In 1997, *ABC News* and the *Washington Post* found that 58% of Americans reported to have volunteered for a community group in the last year. The percentage of individuals doing volunteer work is up 44% from 1984. When asked if volunteer work was a one-time or regular activity, 46% responded that they volunteer on a regular basis. This represents a quarter of the entire adult population involved with some type of volunteer activity.

Effective management of volunteers is key to the success of most non-profit agencies. Volunteer managers are adult educators because they are in the business of working with adults to provide services to the community. When working with adults, managers have an opportunity and perhaps an obligation to provide effective training to enhance the learning opportunity for the volunteers. This learning obligation is important to both the agency and the volunteer. Effective training enables the agency to achieve its goals of providing service to the community and to make good use of volunteer time in order to retain their service.

Non-profit organizations need to recognize that volunteer training programs are educational opportunities. Volunteering is an educational activity that begins with the individual. Over 100 million Americans who volunteer are involved in a variety of activities. They inform, teach, heal, comfort, support, guide, feed, serve and advocate for people, communities and causes. Effective volunteer management includes recognizing the needs of volunteers, listening to their input and creating an environment that will inspire and challenge their participation. The ability to provide effective training opportunities can assure growth and future volunteer leadership.

The purpose of this paper is to recognize the role of volunteer managers as adult educators and to examine the application of adult education methodology to develop effective non-profit volunteer training programs. This paper addresses the concern that because volunteer managers do not see themselves as adult educators many training programs are not used as opportunities to enhance the experience of the adults involved with volunteer service.

The adult learners referenced in this paper are the volunteers who work without pay for a non-profit organization that is formally organized and has as its purpose service to individuals in the community. Volunteers come from all age groups, educational backgrounds, income levels, genders and types of employment. One of the biggest changes in volunteering during the last 20 years has been the shift toward shorter-term commitments with non-profit agencies. This shift has been influenced by a greater portion of adults working full-time and the increased competition by non-profit agencies for volunteers (McCurley & Bradshaw, 1988). Volunteer mangers need to pay greater attention to the needs and requirements of the volunteers, including providing educational opportunities through continuous training. Individuals who volunteer remain committed to service when, according to Emily Morrison (1994):

- They feel appreciated
- They can see that their presence makes a difference
- There is a chance for advancement
- There is an opportunity for personal growth
- They receive private and public recognition
- They feel capable of handling the tasks offered
- There is a sense of belonging and teamwork
- They are involved in the administration process: problem solving, decision-making, and objective setting
- Their personal needs are being met

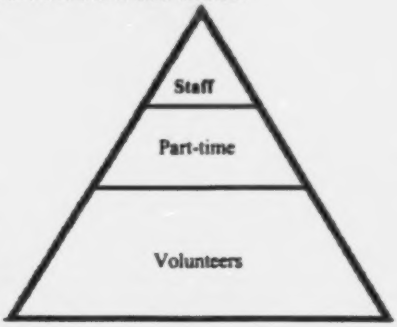
Volunteer service is defined as tasks, activities, and programs created by the agency and performed in a coordinated way within the organization. Voluntary action potentially offers unique opportunities for personal growth and realization of personal potentials to almost any person at any stage of life. Non-profit organizations can help assure future leadership by recognizing the need for continuing education.

Volunteer training programs are defined as the activities paid staff arrange for the volunteers in order to introduce them to agency philosophy and mission, place them in specific roles, and provide them with information and skills needed to perform their assignments. Training is the process of instructing volunteers in the specific job-related skills they will need to perform their tasks. The purpose is to provide the volunteer with a context with which to work.

Volunteering provides the ability to liberate individuals and permit the fullest possible measure of personal capacities and potentialities. Through volunteer participation individuals are able to grow as individuals. For some this means intellectual development, the process of becoming increasingly analytical, informed and self-aware about the nature of one's life situation and problems. For others, self-actualization through voluntary action takes on the form of developing unused capacities, talents, skills, or potentials in a more active manner. Examples include opportunities for leadership, learning to speak in public, and practicing management skills (Connors, 1980). Effective volunteer managers recognize the need for volunteers to grow and develop as individuals and structure training opportunities to accommodate those needs.

## 2. Importance of the Concern to Research and Practice

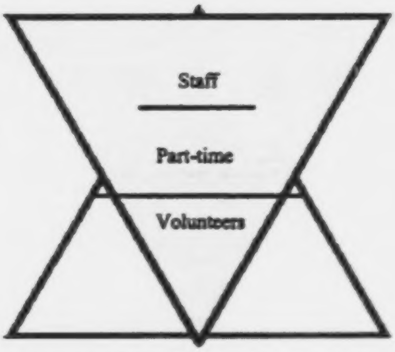
In the book Recruiting and Training Volunteers, Ilsley and Niemi (1981) use Cyril Houle's (1960) typology of leadership to illustrate the importance of volunteers in the field of adult education. Houle's diagram shows the largest group of adult educators, Volunteers, at the bottom of the pyramid, a smaller group of part-time educators in the middle of the pyramid, and the smallest



number of adult educators, the full-time staff, at the apex of the pyramid. This diagram represents the fact that full-time staff members could not provide the programs and services without the help of volunteers.

For example, self-help groups, which on a continual basis provide education, support, and resources for many people in our society, are conducted primarily by volunteers. Self-help group leaders may have support from one or two staff members in a local or national office. This staff support helps the groups advertise meetings, find speakers, and evaluate effectiveness, but the bottom line is that these adult educational opportunities would not exist without the leadership of the volunteers. For the National MS Society self-help groups are one of seven basic nationwide programs. Self-help groups are lead by volunteer facilitators throughout the country. Because of their unique ability to provide information and support to people with MS they are part of the basic services provided by all local MS chapters.

Volunteer training is a vital component of volunteer leadership. Ilsley (1981) states that it is the responsibility of the full-time staff to provide the training for part-time educator and volunteers to successfully understand and complete their roles. Ilsley (1981) illustrates this responsibility by superimposing an inverted triangle over Houle's pyramid. The inverted triangle represents the amount of time each group spends preparing training activities.



Understanding and utilizing adult education methods in non-profit volunteer training programs can enable volunteer administrators to capitalize on the prior experience, motivation, and learning needs of the person participating in the volunteer activity. Most volunteer training programs are currently conducted without knowingly using adult education methodology.

Volunteers want an opportunity to do satisfying work, which allows them to learn and grow while volunteering. As adult educators, volunteer managers are faced with a constant challenge: to utilize available human resources better; recruit and train people in effective ways, and to update and renew the skills of professionals. By using adult education methodology, new, interesting, participative training programs for volunteers can be developed (Schindler-Rainman, 1980).

Ilsley (1990) recommends that the "best training" provides volunteers with the skills and attitudes they need to accomplish their tasks successfully and offers them many chances for learning, inspiration and personal growth. Effective training will enable non-profit agencies to improve volunteer performance, increase attendance and participation, and eliminate high turnover. According to McCurley and Bradshaw (1988), an effective training program operates by identifying those skills, knowledge and behavior, which would be essential in good job performance, and then designing a training format which instructs the volunteers. It should be practical, experiential and tailored to the individual needs of the volunteer. It is helpful in volunteer training to involve both staff and volunteers in designing and delivering the training. The effective training principles outlined by McCurley and Bradshaw utilize many of Malcolm Knowles (1998) core andragogical principles.

The andragogical model outlined by Knowles, Holton & Swanson (1998) is based upon several assumptions of the adult learner. The andragogical model can be summarized as follows;

1. *The need to know.* Adults need to know why they need to learn something before they will take ownership in the learning process.
2. *The learners' self-concept.* Adults have a greater need to feel responsible for their own decisions. Adult educators need to be aware of this capability to be self-directed in order to create learning environments that promote participant involvement and self-directness.
3. *The role of the learners' experiences.* Adults come into any learning experience with a wealth of prior experiences. The individuals' experiences define who they are and it is vital that adult educators value, utilize and build upon those experiences.
4. *Readiness to learn.* Adults are ready to learn things, which they can relate to their real-life situations.
5. *Orientation to learning.* Adults are motivated to learn things that will help them solve problems they are currently dealing with or will help them better perform a task.
6. *Motivation.* Adults are motivated by internal drivers like increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality of life rather then external motivations like higher salaries or promotions.

According to the Ladd Report (1999), rates of volunteerism in the United States are extraordinary. In a study by Princeton Survey Research Associates in 1997, 83% of the respondents said they had volunteered at least once a month in some type of civic activity. A remarkable 29% of the respondents said they volunteered regularly in four to six activities. This time translates into billions of dollars of service provided to the community. The administration of volunteer programs requires organized recruitment, training, and supervision. A survey concerning the management of volunteers conducted by Bruskin/Goldring in 1998 for the United Parcel Service concluded that organizations that are able to recruit and make effective use of volunteer resources are positioned to make the greatest contribution to the public. Time is the most limiting factor in volunteering and volunteers expect the time they donate to be well managed.

The challenge to non-profit organizations is to understand and deal with the obstacles that deter or discourage people from involvement as volunteers. Emily Morrison (1994) identifies several reasons volunteers lose interest, including:

- Discrepancies between their expectations of the tasks and the reality of the situation
- No feeling of making a difference – no praise or reward
- Assignments too routine with no variety
- Little prestige related to the task or group
- No chance for personal growth
- No chance to meet personal needs
- Too little chance to demonstrate initiative or creativity

The United Parcel Service survey (1998) supports many of these reasons that volunteers lose interest. The survey found that people are more likely to volunteer when they feel an organization is well managed and will make good use of their time. The following percentages indicate that volunteer management is a critical issue in non-profit agencies.

- 58% of the public says they would be very likely to volunteer more if "the volunteer organization made good use of volunteer time"
- 52% indicate they would be very likely to volunteer more in an organization that "has a reputation for being well-managed"
- 50% say they would volunteer more if an organization made "better use of talents, skills, or expertise".
- 40% have stopped volunteering for an organization at some time because of one or more poor volunteer management practices.

Poor volunteer management practices result in more lost volunteers than people losing interest because of personal or family needs. The best way for volunteer organizations to receive more hours of volunteer service is to be careful managers of the time already being given. Being careful managers of volunteer time includes utilizing adult education methodology. Enhancing volunteer training programs through the use of andragogy will advance the theory of adult education because volunteer experiences are inherently learning experiences. The practice of adult education will advance by expanding the use of adult education principles in a field that traditionally has not utilized such methodology.

### 3. **Various Approaches to Volunteer Training**

Current volunteer training models focus on volunteer recruitment, motivation, and placement. Little research has been conducted concerning the education provided to adults through volunteer training programs. "Volunteerism is a tradition in our democratic society, but we need to take a closer look at the educational benefits to be derived from voluntary service in the community and how that experience can be enhanced through using the service learning [adult education] methodology." (Peterson, 1998)

Research has been conducted in an attempt to identify an individual's decision to participate in volunteer activities. Much of this research is based upon the motivational needs behind volunteer participation. (Danoff, Kopel, 1994) Other studies focus on treating volunteers as customers, utilizing a service quality perspective for the volunteer experience. (Keaveney, Saltzman, and Sullivan, 1991)

The variety of general training models is endless, from one-day events to on-going series. Adult educators have used many approaches to create effective learning environments for adults. Schindler-Rainman (1980) captures the essence of effective approaches to volunteer training by stressing the importance of involving current volunteers in the planning and design of training, developing specific training programs for a particular group or individual at a particular time for a specified purpose.

Designing volunteer training is an on-going process and as such it follows Knowles (1984) andragogical design process. Designing an andragogical learning experience involves seven elements:

1) Climate setting – physical environment and psychological atmosphere
    a. Physical environment – arranging the space unlike a traditional classroom, usually in a circle so everyone can participate in discussion.

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b. Psychological climate – includes mutual respect, trust, supportiveness, openness and fun.

2) Involving learners in mutual planning
3) Involving participants in diagnosing their own needs for learning
4) Involving learners in formulating their own learning objectives
5) Involving learners in designing learning plans
6) Helping learners carry out their learning plans
7) Involving learners in evaluating their learning

## 4. The Way in Which Volunteer Training Links Theory and Practice

Adult education theory is relevant, but seldom used by non-profit professionals who train adult volunteers in community agencies. Stronger training programs will enhance outcomes for both the agency and the volunteers. Knowles (1984) andragogical model can be applied in whole or part in a wide variety of educational activities including volunteer training programs. An essential element of adult education methodology is the flexibility to utilize what works and to disregard what does not fit. Adult education recognizes the value of prior experience, the need to be self-directed and the benefits of involving the participant in planning, designing and carrying out the learning process.

Utilizing andragogy, volunteer and agency effectiveness can be increased. Volunteers become more competent to perform their roles and more committed to the service they are providing. Volunteer managers are able to better use volunteer time, staff time, and agency resources. Benefits for the volunteer include skill development, social interaction, and opportunities to utilize prior experience. The field of adult education has much to offer volunteer administration, through the application of adult education methodology to enhance non-profit volunteer training programs.

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*Due to space considerations a complete reference list will be available during the conference.*

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# Empowering Women for Development Through Regionally Planned Community Education Strategies: A Southern African Perspective

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**Paper presented at the Midwest Research-to-Practice conference in Adult, Continuing and Community Education, September, 22-24, 1999, University of Missouri-St. Louis, USA.**

# Empowering Women for Development Through Regionally Planned Community Education Strategies: A Southern African Perspective

## Abstract

Despite increasing attention accorded to women's problems throughout the world, supported by highly respected activities such as the 1995 Fourth World Conference in Beijing, China, women continue to be placed in an unequal footing vis-à-vis men in all facets of economic and social life (Rives and Yousefi, 1997). This affects their worth and status as citizens capable of contributing to the national development.

Development is multi-faceted phenomenon, which must not be imposed but must rather involve active participation of all for it to be effective, meaningful and sustainable. Most development programmes in Africa do not only use a pyramidal structural approach but they are more importantly elitist in nature. In other words, the bureaucrats in the corridors of power, as it's their usual practice, often "think" and "plan" for, rather than work with the general masses, majority of whom are women who live in rural neglected areas and are stereotypically viewed as being ultra-conservative, naïve and apathetic to change. We believe that real development can only be assessed by the criterion of active participation of people at all levels of national development including essentially women, who are not only in the majority on the continent of Africa but who are also labelled as the forgotten group. Participation by all, including women, would give legitimacy to development efforts and therefore foster sustainability. Failure to acknowledge women's contribution in development puts brakes on the progress of African nations.

Paradoxically however, in developing African countries, women are seen more or less as object, property or appendages of men. According to the deep-rooted but obsolete traditional belief system, African women are not only used as instruments of satisfying men's lust while continually oppressing them, but also, women are 'not to be heard, but to be seen' (that is, they should be readily available to be used by other members of the society). This robs them of their legitimate right to participate meaningfully and actively in the process of national development programmes. We emphatically believe that as long as women's contribution continues to be seen

through this traditional patriarchal lens - as 'home-tools,' development in African nations would be held back.

Despite efforts to free women from oppression, such as the Beijing conference, which as it were, an eye opener for the global fight against women's oppression, victimisation and exploitation, women's status continues to be shaped by some cultural heritage, stereotyping and some ill-conceived economic strategies. In Southern Africa, for example, women are still being relegated to the background through discriminatory treatment, in areas such as inheritance right, division of labour, access to political and economic resources, legal and social treatment, access to educational and employment opportunities, agricultural practice, land ownership and socio-economic and national development programmes.

The authors opine that there should be a full spate of awareness creation regarding the strains and contradictions between development strategies and the utilisation of womanpower (both as participants and as beneficiaries) as an economic asset or a resource to be developed and exploited appropriately in the development process. The philosophy underpinning the process of development is to make people live a better and humane life devoid of abject poverty and squalor. It is only when women are fully engaged that they will develop their total human potential and make their maximum contribution to the societal development in all its ramifications, especially now that we are moving towards the 21st century.

This paper concludes that the imbalances in the socio-economic educo-political and matrimonial structures between men and women in Southern Africa Region, a situation that has been affected by culture and tradition, including the influence of the vestiges of apartheid, have not only eroded the humanity of women but also calls for a drastic measure to change the attitude of the majority of the people and thus restore men's dignity and pride of women.

From our experiences and study of Southern African women in development, we are positive that a change in attitude towards women is achievable. However, it can not easily be achieved without systematically and regionally planned community education programmes, in all forms and styles. Community awareness-raising programmes for example, may empower and remove some forms of prejudices against women, and further accelerate women's integration in the development process, thus improving their qualities of life as an essential group of catalysts of development in the Southern African region.

## INTRODUCTION

Developing countries are inhibited in shaping social policies by some endemic internal factors such as poverty, lack of economic growth, inappropriate training, ignorance caused by high rate of illiteracy, corruption and nepotism. As a result, governments and NGOs are incapacitated to integrate the contributions of everyone, especially those of the women, into the overall national development programmes. Most development in African countries uses the top-down structural approach. This therefore denies the recipients, the opportunity of participating in decisions regarding the development programmes, which will be suitable for enhancing their own standard of living.

Therefore, the major tool which could be used to break the backdrop of ignorance, perpetual dependence and unnecessary victimization which may impede development either at the individual or community level, is education, which may not necessarily be acquired from the four-walls of the formal school system. Education does not only change the world view and orientation of every individuals, it also liberate a society from any form of bondage and oppression, and thus stimulates endogenous development. The ratio of women to men in the statistics of world population is higher, yet, they are the most backward and underprivileged. For example, Malimquist (1993) opines that the overwhelming majority of the illiterate population in the world – 98% - are to be found in the developing countries and it will continue to be so. This is UNESCO's tragic and depressing prediction for the year 2000. Invariably, females constitute the majority of the illiterate population (around two thirds) and the gap between men and women as regards illiteracy is increasing not decreasing. All these factors put together, have some negative effects on the position of women in society and such also will affect their varying contributions to the economic growth of their different countries.

Since our focus in this paper is on the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) we shall zero in our debate on the Southern African Region rather than generalising over Africa or the developing countries as a whole. This regional organization which was formed in 1980 to counter the economic dependence on the then apartheid South Africa, was expanded in 1992 when it also changed its name from Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) to the current SADC, to include nine countries; namely: Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Angola, Namibia, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe while later-on South Africa joined after its emancipation from the yoke of oppression and colonialism.

In all of these countries, as it is in most of the countries on the African continent and perhaps beyond, women have greater responsibilities of being the household heads, taking care of the children and taking important family decisions while they also engage in productive venture as the majority of their husbands work in the mines, leaving to the women, all other social, marital and agricultural activities. Despite these onerous responsibilities that they shoulder, women were, from the myopic traditional belief system, considered as Legal minors who could not appear in a court of law without a male relative, the husband or even their sons representing them, no matter their social status.

The SADC countries in the region share a gendered colonial legacy that privilege males regardless of women's status in precolonial societies. Among the changes that affected women according to Davison (1992) were that:

1. The state used African male labour to launch its mining and plantation enterprises, leaving women to sustain family-based agricultural production without benefit, often of male labour;

2. Women in matrilineal groups, who had been political leaders and who controlled land and labour were increasingly marginalized;

3. Economic development for Africans became male gendered; and

4. Where educational institutions were set up, African males were singled out for opportunities.

Disturbingly, the gendered nature of the state has continued to persist in the post colonial era. Even in Angola, and Mozambique, where Marxist states were committed to expanding social justice at the onset, except for cosmetic changes, women's status continued to trail men's (Davison 1988; Sheldom 1994). The basic root of the unequal gender treatment and outright discrimination can be traced to the socio-cultural fabric of traditionalism in Africa where the whole operational concept is based on the patriarchal structure.

## CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

In this section, we shall elaborate on and synchronize the concepts of community education as a tool for empowering women to achieve development growth.

To some bureaucrats and novices, the concept of community education has no meaning or value to them. Community education, according to Mallerin (1992) is first an education for the community and hence for citizenship. The term community education may sound new to many people in Africa, the practice however, is by no means new. If community education is the process of community empowerment, then the whole activity is as old as the creation of Africa, for traditional society did not ignore its population in the provision of education. Perhaps the work done was inadequate and elitist in orientation. Even the colonial administrations in Africa selected targets for empowerment through community education from 1940. Perhaps the focus of attention on the poorest of the poor by the new community education movement is distinct. But even the poorest of the poor also constitutes the target of operation of the community development and the fundamental education projects of the post war years in Africa.

In its broad conspectus, community education according to Anyanwu (1993), remains a philosophical concept which serves the entire community by providing for the educational needs of all community members. Its ultimate goal is to develop the process by which members of a community may learn to work together to identify problems and to seek solutions to such problems. It is through this process that an on-going procedure can be established for people to work together on all community issues. The crux of this philosophy lies in the recognition of the basic tenets of the concept of community education, namely, citizen involvement, the sharing of decision-making and total community participation. It is through the acceptance of this philosophy that the possibilities of true development and integration for the total society can be enhanced and sustained. Thus, the operation of community education requires a process whereby learning can be used for individual, community and global betterment. In the real sense, for any development in SADC region and indeed in the whole of Africa to be meaningful, it must involve the active participation of all. This means, the women who are in the majority must be involved at the various levels of development programme. This can only become manifest if we eschew our African traditional belief system and accord the women their rightful place in the society.

Even from a biblical point of view, women were not, at creation in the garden of Eden, made to be above the men, and neither were they created to be men's footmat, hence God did not take the bones used in creating Eve from the head of Adam nor from his feet but from the bones of his ribs as an equal partner in progress. Women in Southern Africa have been repressed and oppressed so much in different forms by their male counterparts to the extent that they have almost lost their womanness and self-concept. They require to be empowered. Liamzon (1997) quoting Thomas-Slayter (1995) defines the concept of empowerment as a process through which individuals, local groups, the communities, identify and shape their lives and the kind of society in which they live. It can be experienced in individual level or in terms of households, local groups or communities or even large entities. Empowerment means the ability of people to organize and influence change on the basis of their access to knowledge, to political processes and to financial, social and natural resources. Approaches to people's empowerment is thus to find ways to mobilize local resources, engage diverse social groups in decision-making, identify patterns which eliminate poverty and build consensus and accountability. Appropriately conceptualized and adequately implemented, community education can be used for women's empowerment aimed at social mobilization, changing women's state of mind regarding the stereotypic cultural view and thus work towards the achievement of balance in the society. One cannot run away from the temptation of saying that whether it is a farce or fallacy, the concept of democratic development in the African context is a mirage. This is because, more often than not, we engage in the process of bureaucratising rather than democratising development activities in Africa. Democratization can be conceived of as the process whereby:

a. the individual becomes an active partner and not a mere passive receiver of any development object,

b. the variety of information exchanged increase, and

c. the extent and quality of social representation or participation in local and national development programmes are augmented.

Although, the term development defies all-embracing definition because of its different applications, however, one basic element is change. Hence, Bopp (1994) opines that development is not something that can be delivered to people because it comes from within. People engage in development activities by reflecting on their lives and on the conditions of their lives, when they can assess their needs and draw up and implement the necessary means for changing those conditions. This is the focal point where empowerment for women comes in readily to stimulate development when community education strategies are introduced.

## POSITION OF WOMEN IN SOUTHERN AFRICA VIS-À-VIS CULTURAL PRACTICES AND TRADITIONAL BELIEF SYSTEM.

As we indicated earlier, cultural and traditional belief systems, have not only contributed negatively to the temerity with which women are treated in Southern African Region, they have also exacerbated the dehumanizing status of women. For example, Briceno (1998) quoting Bunch and Reilly (1994) states that more women die each day from various forms of gender-based violence than from any other type of human rights abuse. This ranges from female infanticide and the disproportionate malnutrition of girl children, to the multiple forms of coercion, battery, rape, mutilation, sexual assault and murder that many women face in every region of the world, throughout their lives, simply because they are females. What a frustrating way of living?

Despite efforts to free women from oppression, such as the Beijing conference, which as it were, was an eye opener for the global fight against women's oppression, victimisation and exploitation, women's status continues to be shaped by some cultural heritage, stereotyping and some ill-conceived economic strategies. In Southern Africa, for example, women are still being relegated to the background through discriminatory treatment such as inheritance right, division of labour, access to political and economic resources, legal and social treatment, access to educational and employment opportunities, agricultural practice, land ownership and socio-economic and national development programmes.

Stromquist, (1998) stresses that women's access to employment, however small their wages, constitutes a crucial means of becoming less dependent on their husbands and thus, of exercising more assertiveness in domestic decision making. Paradoxically however, in Southern Africa where women are more than men in number, and in cases where they are employed, whether in the formal or in the informal sector, they have to take care of the family including in many cases, the unemployed husbands, while no form of independence is enjoyed but regular domestic battery is the language spoken by most of the men. This inevitably lead to psychological, emotional, physical and mental disorder on the part of such women so battered by the men, almost on regular basis.

Many innocent women have been raped and sexually abused while many have been murdered by their husbands on the ground of waywardness. Charlotte Bunch et al. (1998) argue that in many cultures, it is possible for a man to kill an allegedly unfaithful, disobedient or wilful wife and be absolved on the grounds of honour. The legal defence based on "honour" and "provocation by the victim" often requires little or no evidence and results in unduly short prison terms for wife-murder or a fine of less than one hundred dollars, even in cases involving premeditation. This situation has been allowed to recur because of the laxity in the states laws and policies in the Southern African countries because of the sub-ordinated status of women, who are being treated like minors and the differential legal rights which the men enjoy but which women are denied. In some cultures in the Southern African Region, it seems a welcome gesture for domestic battery to occur as that to some, is a sign of love from the husband to the wife.

Bunch et al (1998) conclude that there is no doubt that violence against women will inhibit development efforts. There is no growing awareness, inside and outside the development community, that our planet's most urgent problems cannot be addressed effectively if we fail to tap the energy and creativity of half of its population. But if women are continually being victimized by the violence or the threat of violence, they will not be able to take full advantage of educational or employment opportunities and they cannot participate fully in public life, including development.

## REGIONAL COMMUNITY EDUCATION STRATEGIES

Women are in the majority in the world population, but they are the more marginalised, oppressed and neglected group, even though their contributions to social, economic, family and agricultural productivity within a country are enormous. It is important therefore, to propose ways by which women can wake up from their slumber, set themselves free from the bondage of traditional beliefs and become totally liberated not only to assume their equal rightful positions with men in African society but also to become sensitized to contribute to the overall development of their individual countries and indeed collectively to Southern African Region. It is noteworthy to mention that a process whereby an individual exerts efforts to effect change in one's life or environment, though very important, are basically limited in achieving positive results simply because of limited scope. Rather, a collective effort, as proposed by Kabeer (1994) not only increase the numbers of the individuals involved in a social transformational action but they also provide contexts in which empowerment is more actively and energetically pursued. Collective action has the potential to create a stronger voice and sustain a more powerful challenge to discriminatory structures, and to elicit a more adequate response.

Empowering women to participate actively in national development will start from their initial involvement in analysing their own problems, proposing solutions and consequently taking collective action. Neglecting women in development as a result of traditional belief will not only slow down the pace of national development but also leaves the development cycle incomplete. Regional networking is central to empowerment that is aimed at social mobilization and changing the state of mind of women through community education with a consequence on participation, consciousness raising and collective social action. To push for reform, Davison (1998) expresses that women need greater political power. One way of increasing their power is to regionalize, so that their voices are multiplied with other women's voices in the sub-region.

In order to integrate women into national and regional developments in Southern Africa, the following suggested strategies should be taken seriously:

1. Women need more power to control their lives to meet their practical and strategic needs and to shape the worlds in which they live in ways that are not themselves oppressive. This could only be realistically achieved if women could embark on advocacy role to influence the national governments of their various countries to give legal recognition to women's organisations in order to fight for women's rightful place. A further effort could be made to ensure that various constitutions of African countries accord women equal employment rights, better conditions of service and adequate tax relief; equality in inheritance and property laws and equal sharing of responsibilities in the home and in the community and with the raising of and caring for children. The media could be used with paid advertisements by women organisations or by sponsoring talk shows on the televisions with major focus on improving the conditions of women. The net effect is to sensitise the public, both male and female, young and old, rich and poor, through meaningful media propaganda, debates and enlightenment programmes particularly on the radio, for awareness creation.

2. Women should not be discriminated against especially when it comes to education. Because most rural women who are in the majority are illiterates, they therefore have to depend on others to read and sign legal documents for them. Education plays a critical liberating role in the lives of people and therefore, women should be put on board to benefit adequately through formal and non-formal education. The dividend of such advantage will lead to the protection of women's human rights through adequate knowledge of legal education which will pave the way for women of all walks of life to apply the laws to prevent being victimized and oppressed by men and thus increase their empowerment opportunities. The two possible ways of achieving this are: Women organisations, particularly those who are enlightened should crusade

for reforms to uproot traditional beliefs by sensitising the rural old men and women who believe that the place of the women is in the kitchen, therefore, denying the young ladies the opportunity to acquire better education. The second strategy is to conscientize the young ladies both at the primary and secondary schools through debates to instil in them the consciousness of gender equality rather than to consider themselves as subservient and inferior to the men in academic, social, political and economic spheres.

3. Governments should increase the participation of women in institutional and administrative life through the creation of ministries of women's affairs aimed at women's empowerment and development or through quotas for representation at local, regional and national levels. In many countries, it must become mandatory that women should have a percentage share of the parliamentary seats while cabinet ministerial positions should be shared equitably between men and women politicians.

4. Men should be sensitized not only to change their attitude from treating women as instruments of pleasure derivation as well as appendages to them by merely allowing women to be "seen" but not to be "heard" but also to actively participate in gender consciousness raising and change processes. This may have a multiplier effect in reshaping the relationship of men and women in African society. The repressive and dogmatic treatment metted on women widows who must put on mourning clothes for about six months and remain at home for a period of time should be dispensed with, especially when men do not go through such a treatment when their wives die. We are all equal before God and equal treatment should be metted out on both sexes as whatever is good for the goose is equally good for the gander.

5. It is pertinent for women to form women-oriented NGOs on the national, regional and international levels to facilitate networking and collaboration among such organisations. These women NGOs should also organise training programmes toward the empowerment of women and in order to share views and ideas aimed at mobilizing one another to achieve a common goal of total liberation of women from the yoke of obsolete cultural norms and detrimental

traditional beliefs which relegate women to the subservient level. The women lawyers, paralegal personnel or human rights advocates should organise legal literacy workshops and seminars on regular basis for all women of all social groups to stimulate action of women's liberation struggle regionally. Through constant and rotational legal seminars and workshops on the rights of women in society, to which the government officials should be invited, there is likelihood for a gradual change of heart on the part of the men to give recognition to the women in our society.

6. There must be governmental will, backed with ideological orientation to mobilize and improve the conditions of women in the region. This could start at a national level where programmes are designed for the betterment of women's lives. Such could take the example of Nigeria where in the early 90s governmental structures labelled as Better Life for Rural Women and Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Reconstruction (MAMSER) were put in place. The former was legitimized by making the wife of the governor in each of the then 32 states the chairperson to coordinate women's programmes in the states and the wife of the Head of State as the overall coordinator of the programme and to whom all the first ladies from the 32 states were responsible. That was a clear example of national networking to improve the lives of women in the society.

7. Entrepreneurship programmes could be put in place for women in the informal sector to engage in and be able to earn a living rather than for them to remain as housewives. This will give the women economic empowerment and liberation from the kitchen and full time child care responsibility. Vocational centres for skills acquisition could be set up in different areas in the country to address the plight of illiterate and unemployed women.

## CONCLUSION

The general debate about gender stereotyping remains unresolved, yet development can be stunted without bringing on board the contributions of the women, who are considered the weakest partner but who also are in the majority.

If men can change their parochial view for once and uproot the deep-rooted but obsolete traditional belief system, whereby women are considered as appendages to men, used only as instruments of satisfying men's lust while continually oppressing them thus consequently robbing them of their legitimate right to meaningfully participate and actively contribute to the process of national development programmes, the whole world will be a heaven on earth to live in.

Gender discrimination is an offshoot of the socialization process at home, whereby boys and girls are treated unequally. This kind of downgrading treatment of women permeates all spheres of our social life and as such spells doom in the wheel of global development and fundamental human rights guarantee.

It is therefore pertinent for women to adopt various strategies to educate, liberate and conscientize their women folk through regionally planned programmes and through the formation of national associations for effective networking. This process will be aimed at embarking on advocacy role to sensitize and influence the governments to accord the women some legal human rights in the constitutions, so as to enjoy a peaceful and humane life devoid of all forms of violence against women, particularly as we move into the 21st century.

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# Children of Abraham Sit Down Together to Learn: Initiating Interreligious Learning with Muslims and Jews

Nadira K Charaniya and Jane West Walsh

## Abstract

What do American Jews really know about Muslims? What do American Muslims really know about Jews? These questions undergird this account of how two religious adult educators--a Jew and a Muslim--came to engage in collaborative, dialogic, relational and transformational interreligious learning. This paper describes who we are, how we came to be collaborators, the impact that the collaboration has had on our practice, and the research agenda that has emerged from our experiences and practice. This work falls into a growing area of adult education research and practice referred to as border crossing. Within that growing body of literature, interreligious learning is an area that has not yet been deeply explored.

## Introduction

We initiated a collaborative interreligious dialogue with one another as cohort members engaged in doctoral studies in Adult Education at National-Louis University (NLU) in Chicago. At first incidentally, then consciously and purposefully, we began to learn from one another about our different religious traditions and how they are taught in the context of American society. Through dialogue, we each have gained new knowledge about Islam and Judaism and, because we are educators, about the processes of teaching and learning that take place within our communities. We are learning more about each other's traditions, and at the same time, we each learn more about our own, in the presence of the other. Because this work is deeply personal, reflecting our life histories and the values we hold most dear, it is only natural that we include a brief background on who we are, what drives us to do this work, and how we came to be collaborative practitioners and research scholars.

### A Jewish woman's perspective: Jane's story

I am a religious Reform Jew who is a third generation Jewish American woman. I grew up in a middle class home in Allentown, Pennsylvania, a small industrial city in eastern Pennsylvania, in the 1950's and 60's. Three of my grandparents immigrated to Philadelphia from Poland or Russia in the early part of the twentieth century. This part of the family came from Lublin, a city in Poland known as a center for Jewish learning for hundreds of years. My father's mother Dora, whose name I was given as my middle name, was born in Philadelphia. Religious practices changed within each generation. My mother's parents lived according to what might now be called modern Orthodox tradition, while my father's family did not. My parents were very secular in belief and practice, yet were Conservative synagogue members. I learned most about being a Jew outside of my home, in youth group and at camp. As a young woman, I made a commitment to Jewish life and learning that led me from a career in science communication to attending the Rhea Hirsch School of Education at Hebrew Union College, and a new career as a professional Jewish educator. Since 1981, I have been engaged in organizing and facilitating Jewish teaching and learning in cities around the United States and in Jerusalem.

My exposure to Islam and Muslims (prior to meeting my collaborative partner Nadira), was limited to high school and college course work and books, participation as a guest in Iftar meals (meals to break the Ramadhan fasts) at the Islamic Center of Cleveland, and film and media reports. While living and studying in Israel, once for a year in 1982 and again for a year in 1991, I had opportunities to visit the Islamic Museum and the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosques, as a tourist. I met and spoke with Muslims who worked at the college and the apartment complex where I studied and lived in Jerusalem, though we had no forum or occasion to discuss our religious ideas. My assumptions about Islam were monolithic, not carefully researched. My understanding was not multi-dimensional or deeply understood. It was historical, thinking about how Jews and Muslims had shared cultural efflorescence in places like Spain and North Africa, hundreds of years ago. However, in the day to day of my life as a Jewish educator, I was influenced primarily by the idea that in the Middle East, many Arabs are Muslims and what I knew of Israel's struggles for peace and security. In recent years, through the American media, I had a growing acquaintance with the Nation of Islam and its ideas.

Until meeting Nadira, I had no sustained personal contact with the Muslim community. Because of our growing respect for one another and a growing empathy towards one another, I am drawn in to learning more and more. It has been an honest exchange, characterized by a growing sense of trust that we can negotiate areas of conflict and misunderstanding, should they rise up before us.

What attracts me to interreligious learning after service as a Jewish educational professional working within the Jewish community for almost 20 years? Critical reflection (Brookfield, 1995; Mezirow, 1990) on my life history has helped me to generate responses to this important question. Hunting assumptions, I further asked " Why now?" and "Why not years before?" Upon reflection, I learned that it is not in spite of, but because of, my religious commitments to the Jewish community that I find myself engaged in this work. Through a purposeful process of adult Jewish learning, I once had made a dramatic move from life on the very margins of the Jewish community, where I lived prior to 1981, as a secular and assimilated Jew, to the religious and cultural center of the community, as a professional Jewish educator. I engage in research and practice about interreligious learning now both as a Jewish educator with a commitment to social justice and as an adult educator, with a commitment to democratic social change. I understand my practice as an outgrowth of the value concept Jews refer to as *B'tzelem elohim* (Hebrew phrase that means: in the image of God). This big idea, that all humanity was created in the image of God, making us all brothers and sisters in the most profound way, is part of the master story of the Jewish people and at the heart of my commitment to facilitating positive experiences of interreligious learning for myself, and others.

### A Muslim woman's perspective: Nadira's story

I am a Muslim born in Zaire, of East Indian ancestry. I have lived in six different cities in four countries on three continents. I have been a religious educator, adjunct instructor, and educational consultant. Prior to my encounter with Jane, my exposure to Judaism and Jews was limited. Primarily based on media coverage of the Israel-Palestinian situation, text book encounters, relationships with secular Jews, historical (and sometimes polemic) accounts of Muslim-Jewish encounters, and Qur'anic literature on the relationship of Muslims and Jews and Christians as people of Abrahamic tradition. My assumptions about Jews were based on an understanding of Judaism as a monolithic body of religious tradition and practice.

There are several aspects of my life that drive me to want to engage in both doing and learning about adult interreligious learning. Most prominent of these is the diversity represented through my life experiences. Having interacted with people from many ethnic groups, races, nationalities, social classes, and religious persuasions, I have had opportunity to see the powerful results that occur when people are able to effectively cross borders. I have also seen the immense difficulties that result from intolerance, apathy and ignorance. A personal encounter with a group of youth from the National Front (a neo-Nazi group in England) in which my brother and I were the victims of racial persecution is an important example of this.

For me, pluralism is like a mosaic. There is such beauty and richness in a mosaic and yet each tiny fragment that makes up the pattern and picture is different. Not on a superficial level like puzzle pieces that have different colors within them, but on a deeper level. The pieces of a mosaic do not have to fit into anything; each piece is able to retain a unique and separate shape yet still be part of the larger picture. The grout allows for that diversity. The grout coalesces the individual pieces into a beautiful whole. Each adds to the richness of society by its uniqueness and difference. Each can reflect the colors, shapes, hue or texture of other pieces yet still have the right to be different. The most important thing about a mosaic is that you can re-arrange the individual pieces or recreate the larger picture and retain a sense of cohesiveness and unity. In other words, change is both possible and likely. The most important element in a mosaic, without which the pieces would be nothing more than splinters of glass or tile, is the grout. The grout is what makes it possible for all these diverse fragments to come together to create beauty. It serves as both a bonding agent as well as a supporting one. It does not physically alter the shape, color, hue or texture of each piece, but it does allow each individual piece to be part of a pattern. It supports the pieces, keeping them in position, where they are. When the grout is cracked and broken, or not there at all, the support and bonding of the pieces in the design is not there. For me, the grout in the mosaic represents the dialogue and relational learning that takes place when people successfully cross religious and cultural borders. From my experiences with Jane, I have a deeper insight than ever about what happens after a successful border crossing experience. Indeed, one can return home with greater understanding, insight and empathy for those fellow learners, those we have once known only as " other", who took part in a mutual yet distinct journey.

### How we came to be collaborators

Educators from very diverse worlds of practice, we were brought together as research scholars when we became members of a cohort of learners in the National-Louis University Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) Doctoral Program. Several essential events reinforced the growing collaborative relationship.

First of these events was Jane's encounter with Nadira's library of Ismaili Muslim religious education curriculum for children. We had already established a friendly relationship during the first two-week Summer Institute of the NLU doctoral program. In fact, Nadira offered to give Jane a ride to the airport in Chicago, and a place to rest for a few hours before her flight home. This gave Jane opportunity to look at Nadira's library. Time flew by as Jane asked Nadira about the colorful books with Arabic writing on her shelf. Nadira introduced Jane to a collection of Ismaili Muslim educational materials designed to be used in Ismaili religious education programs around the world. Jane knew of many similar kinds of books from the field of Jewish education. Suddenly, we realized that from two different traditions we had a lot to share and learn from one another. This discovery was an eye-opening experience that led both of us to move from being fellow cohort members and friends in a doctoral program, to being religious and adult educator colleagues.

The second significant event came when Jane had the opportunity to plan an adult education program as part of a series at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles. Jane was honored as an alumni educator scholar-in-residence for a week in December 1999. She invited Nadira to co-facilitate one session. Together, we planned a program called "A Conversation in Muslim and Jewish Education," which was open to all of the rabbinical, Jewish education and Jewish communal service students and faculty. We planned it carefully, considering the assumptions the participants might have about Islam. The program drew over 40 participants, many of whom had never had such an opportunity to learn about Islamic religious education in general, and the Ismaili Muslim community in particular. To co-plan our presentation, we engaged in a more in-depth process of curriculum analysis together, using the Muslim children's education booklets as a way of seeing how values, language and religious practices and traditions are taught. Of great interest to us was a growing sense, derived from being among the program participants, that there might be more to learn from one another not only about our respective religions but also how we respond to challenges in the process of educating the children and adults within our respective communities. We were encouraged and excited by planning and facilitating this program together. In addition, while in Los Angeles, we met with Sara Lee, one of Jane's mentor's and the director of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education at the college where we presented our program, to talk about her work in Catholic-Jewish interreligious learning. We learned then that Lee had worked extensively with Mary Boys of the Union Theological Seminary for several years, planning interreligious learning projects for Catholics and Jews. We got copies of their journal articles published in the journal Religious Education. This conversation inspired us to think more about our growing interest in Muslim-Jewish interreligious learning.

The third significant event was a decision to work collaboratively on the concept paper for a doctoral research project, and submit a proposal for the Midwest Research to Practice Conference. With this step, we consciously began to think about the larger implications of our experiences so far, with a focus both on our collaborative, interreligious experiences and on what they might mean for the field of adult education. We realized that we wanted to focus on the learning that takes place when interreligious dialogue takes place. We also wanted to know more about how it works, who does it, why they do it and then nature of its outcomes. Starting with the insights from our own experiences and the work of Boys and Lee (1996), we knew that something important was happening that could be better understood and shared through further practice and research. We began to look for connections between what we ourselves were experiencing and what we were learning through our coursework in adult education. For example, we found a link between our experience of talking to one another for hours on end about our personal experiences as a Muslim and as a Jew and the concept of dialogic learning as represented in Mezirow's (1990) description of communicative learning. Furthermore, we began to understand that in the process of learning information about our respective religious traditions, we were engaging in the process of critical reflection described by Mezirow (1990.) As we look back on it now, and as we have experienced it since then, we began the interreligious learning process by "reassessing our own orientation to receiving, knowing, believing, feeling and acting" (p.13) about one another as members of our respective religious communities. We were doing this in the presence of one another, and on our own, as we critically reflected and moved forward in time.

### Life Experience and Practice Inspire us to Work Collaboratively

Although neither of us now live in Chicago where our doctoral coursework takes place, our accommodations at the home of another cohort member for the monthly weekend seminars means that we often spend time talking as we drive to and from the campus or share a late night snack. Our fellow cohort members join in on our conversations and help us to reflect more deeply on our nascent thoughts. We knew we could learn together but we needed more time to see if we could write together. In January of 1999, we established a weekly Sunday morning telephone conversation routine. We send e-mail messages, and post messages to a discussion forum area set up for us through the doctoral program. We keep research planning notes filed on our computers. We have considered recording our calls. While we work on tasks and share ideas about our assignments for school, there is ongoing dialogue about one another as Muslim and Jew, our ideas, values and beliefs, and details about the various religious holidays and traditions, as they come around. Current events inspire us to work harder. This ongoing learning of our own, imbedded deeply within the context of our relationship as doctoral cohort colleagues and friends, has inspired us to think about interreligious learning in more depth.

### Planning Qualitative Research in Interreligious Learning

We have begun to draft a research design with two concurrent phases. Phase 1 is conceptualized as a participatory study in which we will be the primary participants. This phase involves our continued conscious and deliberate attempt at engaging in interreligious learning for ourselves, with one another. It is understood as a process of learning about interreligious learning by engaging in interreligious learning, a process similar to group learning about group learning described by Kasl, Dechant, and Marsick (1993). Our interreligious learning activities will include an analysis of religious education curricula from each tradition and a study of Jewish and Muslim texts from the Torah and the Qur'an, as a means of exploring Abrahamic roots common to both traditions. It will also include the sharing of, and participation in, rituals and ceremonies that take place within our own religious communities, and the sharing of, and participation in, religious rituals and ceremonies outside of our immediate communities, when possible and appropriate. A second phase of research planned is an interpretive study based on interviews with Muslims and Jews who have participated in a Muslim and Jewish interreligious dialogue over the course of a minimum of six consecutive months. We are looking for participants now.

## Conclusion

As we imagine our work in interreligious learning moving forward, we have an idea of what we would like to learn. We hope that insights shared by participants in the study will enhance existing descriptions and understandings about the role of dialogue in transforming assumptions about religious ideas. Beyond this, we are considering the role of emotion in interreligious learning. If we could describe the process of how adults develop empathy for others, while negotiating the vicissitudes of fear and anger, it could be a significant contribution to understanding how to facilitate interreligious learning that leads to successful outcomes. In addition, there are three specific ways we believe our research will contribute to the development of theory and practice in adult education. First, we believe that this work will make an initial contribution towards the development of a theory of adult interreligious learning; second, we anticipate that this study will add to the knowledge base of the growing area of border crossing literature and third, we expect that this study will add to the growing body of knowledge about perspective transformation . We look to our colleagues for guidance and review as this exciting research and practice agenda unfolds.

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# Voices of Job Loss:
## From Disorienting Dilemma to Perspective Transformation

Pat Coleman-Hoeppel, Ed.D.

This qualitative, phenomenological research examined the subjective experience of unexpected, unprovoked job loss and gives voice to 12 mid-to senior-level managers who, at least two years prior to participating the study, lost their jobs as a result of organizational change. Framed by the concepts of transformation theory, organizational behavior, and the social construction of reality, the research considers how contextual events can trigger deep, life-altering learning that can lead to revised worldviews—the essence of transformational learning. The participants of the study described a reflective, soul-searching journey that led to perspective transformation and behavior change. The guiding assumptions and unexamined beliefs they held about work were examined and changed. Loyalty which once guided the workplace behavior of this group has been replaced by deeply-held personal values. By examining the ways in which unexamined beliefs and expectations are changed through an interaction with the environment, the role of the adult education practitioner as change agent is illustrated and implications for practice are described to demonstrate the connection between research and practice.

During the last decade, an estimated 5 to 9 million management-level employees lost their jobs as a result of organizational changes. Job loss is a disturbing experience for corporate employees whose expectations include long-term, continuous employment culminating with a 'gold watch" and retirement parties. In the past, job loss was correlated with recession, not a booming economy. But today, organizational growth and profitability are not indicators of continued employment. For most people, this phenomenon is particularly difficult to understand as it represents a major change in the psychological contract (Schein, 1978)—a tacit understanding between employee and employer—based on a premise that people who are loyal and do good work have a commitment from the employer for secure, long-term employment. To the people whose work behaviors were based upon the premise of the psychological contract, job loss has been very difficult to understand.

Research indicates that many adults engage in learning activities as a result of life-changing events such as divorce, job change, and death in the family (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980; Brookfield, 1987; Knox, 1977; Merriam & Clark, 1991). As organizations continue to reorganize, it is very likely that most educators working with adults will encounter people who have been spurred to seek further education as a result of job loss or in anticipation of employment reductions due to organizational changes in the workplace. For people who have suffered unexpected job loss, the typical anxiety of reentry into a learning environment is compounded by anxiety emerging from a life-changing crisis. Adults who have lost their jobs carry additional burdens resulting from financial, family, and personal concerns such as the loss of confidence and diminished self-esteem (Holmes, 1990; Huttner, 1991; May, 1990; Maysent, 1995; Turner, 1989). Yet, this research suggests that a life-changing event such as job loss challenges a persons belief system, which in turn can lead to new outlooks and broadened perspectives. Thus, educators working with adults who have experienced a recent life-crisis such as job loss may indeed have an excellent opportunity to facilitate deeper learning.

Using job loss as an example of a critical life event, this study of the learning process that follows such events illuminates the interaction between contextual change and individual change. The learning journey described by the participants of the study was quite stormy. Like captains of a ship tossed about in an angry sea, these navigators lost their bearings as a result of losing their jobs. The value of loyalty to one's employer was no longer a trustworthy guiding beacon that led the way to success in the workplace. Loyalty, which once gave meaning to their work, was gone. The purpose of this research was to examine how the meaning of work was restored and to investigate the dynamic between context change and individual change. An analysis of organizational-behavior literature suggests that the once widely held value of loyalty in the workplace has been greatly diminished—indicating that a culture change is occurring in the workplace. The long held belief that secure employment was coupled with loyalty to one's employer has been revised. Personal values now appear to influence worker behavior to a greater degree than loyalty.

## Methodology

The questions that guided the research were: "How do people make meaning from the experience of job loss resulting from organizational change such as downsizing?" and "How does this new meaning influence the workplace culture?" Meaning-making was examined using qualitative methods. Semi-structured interviews and taped transcripts preceded a richly descriptive, phenomenological explication of the subjective experience of job loss and the meaning-making journey that followed that event. A hermeneutic (interpretive) analysis of the interview transcripts, the self-described changes in participant's beliefs and behaviors, and the themes emerging in the literature on this topic provided a mechanism for identifying the changes that appear to be occurring in the workplace culture.

Phenomenology is a means for gaining access to the subjective viewpoint and to the ways in which external experiences, such as job loss, influence the lifeworld. The phenomenological approach led to rich non-causal descriptions and provided access to the ways in which people interpret their everyday lived experience following an unsettling event. The phenomenological method seeks a closer relationship with phenomena such as, in this case, a person's feelings and guiding beliefs that otherwise seem obscure. Through the application of language to thoughts, such phenomena are raised to consciousness and revealed through discussion. Phenomenological reflection—clarifying and explaining a phenomenon—provides insight into the essence and the structure of meaning of the lived experience (Van Manen, 1990).

Each interview audio-tape was reviewed and transcribed. The data from each new interview transcript was compared to previous transcripts, themes were analyzed, and common themes were coded. The interview process ceased at the point of data saturation, which occurred when no new themes emerged from the transcript analysis. Although saturation was suspected following the tenth interview, two more interviews were completed to confirm this suspicion.

During the first reading of each individual transcript, repeated key-words were noted. Next, metaphorical phrases were highlighted and reviewed in a subsequent analysis. Later the entire transcript was read a third time with attention focused on the feeling tone. In this reading, changes in the emotional tone or language were highlighted as possible indicators of transition points in the participant's perspective. Individual themes were abstracted and combined with themes common to all participants.

The data were again analyzed using an interpretive (hermeneutic) process of moving between interview transcripts, the literature, and the emerging themes, all the while raising new questions about the data in order to gain fuller understanding of the experience of job loss and the relationship between the experience and the current context of the workplace. Hermeneutic analysis involves a dialectic process of moving from interpretive hypothesis to evidence, back to an altered hypothesis, back to evidence, and so on (Polkinghorne, 1983). According to the principles of hermeneutics, understanding is always interpretive, there is no unique standpoint for understanding, and knowledge is pragmatically relative to contexts of understanding (Hoy, 1985). The value of individual experience in explaining social institutions is pointed in a discussion of the research process developed at the Chicago School:

> A social institution can be fully understood only if we do not limit ourselves to the abstract study of its formal organization but analyze the way in which it appears in the personal experience of various members of the group and follow the influence it has upon their lives. (Barley, 1989, p. 43)

Finally, a process of collaborative analysis—discussions between the author and research committee members regarding thematic descriptions of the phenomena—helped expand the viewpoint of the author, as recommended by Gadamer (1975).

## Conceptual Framework

The stories told by the participants of this study revealed the lived experience of job loss and the process of meaning construction that followed a critical, life-altering event. To examine this process a multitheoretical approach was taken. Three theories, linked by the general concept of constructionism, provided differing lenses from which to view the experience of job loss resulting from organization change. The broadest of three lenses, social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), considers how cultures are formed, and in theory, explains how cultures are maintained and changed. Schein's (1978) organizational behavior model narrows the focus of the study to examine the underlying assumptions and expectations that exist in the micro-cultures that shape organizations. The third conceptual framework—transformation theory (Mezirow, 1991)—narrows the focus further to examine the ways that individuals internalize their assumptions, develop their guiding beliefs and change their perspectives following a critical life event. Transformation theory holds that when a critical event occurs, a disorienting dilemma is triggered. As a result of this triggering event, a person's frame of reference can be changed through critical reflection (Mezirow, 1991). The critical event in this investigation—job loss due to downsizing—is believed to deeply cut through a person's subjective lifeworld, challenging beliefs, habits, feelings, and worldviews.

## Researcher Data Collection

Self-knowledge is especially important in a study of one's own culture as familiarity with everyday expectations dull the researcher's ability to question the obvious (McCracken, 1988). Because the researcher in a qualitative study is the primary instrument for data collection (Merriam, 1988), the task of the researcher is to understand personal experience and to reflect upon that experience in order to gain knowledge from it. By describing one's own lived experience a researcher gains a more precise sense of what he/she is trying to learn about a phenomenon before endeavoring to examine it in relation to the lives of other people (Van Manen, 1990). In this case, the initial data were gained by the author through an analysis of personal history, reflections upon past transition experiences, and past critical events. This reflective process brought to consciousness personal attitudes, expectations, and biases about the phenomena of work, job loss, and transformational learning. Conscious reflection upon past experience in light of transformational theory brought forth a heightened awareness of the contextual situations that led to the authors' own life transitions. Following this personal analysis, a deeper understanding of the influence of guiding assumptions and contextual change emerged.

## Candidate Data Collection

Mid- to senior-level managers, who lost their jobs due to organizational changes within medium to large corporations, were the subjects of this study. People who lost their jobs for other reasons were not considered. Eligible candidates were terminated from their positions at least two years prior to participating in the study. All candidates were reemployed with a different organization at some point following termination, and all were employed at the time of the interview.

Data were collected in 60- to 90-minute sessions that included semistructured interviews with individual subjects. The purpose of the study, the interviewer's background experience and knowledge of the topic, and the confidentiality of the study were reviewed. The candidates' questions and concerns were solicited and discussed. Consent of the participant was confirmed in writing and demographic information was collected.

Each participant graphed his/her job-satisfaction history, identifying critical events and other high and low points prior to and following job loss, on a chart designed illustrate job satisfaction over time. Each participant determined his/her own criteria for specifying the nature of job satisfaction and critical events. Discussions which encouraged reflection upon past assumptions and beliefs evolved from the participants' verbal reflections during the graphing process and questions were interjected by the researcher as the graphs were being completed. Critical incidents were utilized as a means of probing the participants' subjective world in which the participants' assumptions were embedded (Brookfield, 1990). These discussions were tape recorded.

Throughout the data-collection period, the researcher's observations and personal reflections were recorded in order to monitor biases, raise awareness of the researcher's own beliefs and to allow for bracketing of personal biases during both the interview and data-analysis processes. Bracketing allows the researcher to attend to the speaker's feelings as they emerge in the interviews and also during the analysis of resulting transcripts without the influence of the researcher's own perceptions.

## Results

Twelve people participated in the study—eight males and four females—whose ages spanned a range of 38 to 59 years old. All participants were from the Chicago area and all were White. Eight of the twelve participants had been with their previous employers for more than 15 years. The fewest number of years that any participants had been with the company from which they had been severed was four years. The median amount of time that people were out of work was five months; however, four of the participants were unable to find work for 12 to 14 months. Eight people ranked finding another job as "very difficult," two ranked it as "difficult," and two found it "relatively easy" to gain employment. Eight people participated in outplacement services sponsored by their previous employer. The remaining four participants received no outplacement benefits, but two of the four found resources such as the public library, church career programs, networking with friends, and business contacts to be helpful. Seven people, when reemployed, returned to the same industry or profession, and five changed careers—two of whom became entrepreneurs with businesses of their own. Seven of the twelve people had a decrease in income upon returning to the workplace, four people had salary increases, and one person's salary remained about the same. Current salary levels were not discussed.

Ten of twelve people noted a severe to moderate drop in satisfaction at the point of job loss, but two found vastly increased satisfaction immediately following their severance from the company. Although all the participants indicated optimism about future success and satisfaction with work, four of the twelve participants were somewhat less satisfied with their current work than before job loss. However, it was interesting to note that at the time of the interview, eight of the twelve participants ranked their satisfaction level, on a scale of 1 to 10, at eight or better, indicating higher satisfaction today than at any point in their work history prior to job loss.

All coded transcripts were compared and common elements in the participants' experiences were identified. The analysis in which themes were identified was followed by synthesis—individual themes were fit together as a group to form a whole (Rorty, 1979). These common elements edify an understanding of the group experience of job loss and point to the emerging workplace expectations resulting from organizational changes. The combination of themes illustrated, not individual differences but, the commonality of the experiences among the people in this particular group at a particular time in history.

Several themes were common among each of the transcripts. First, stability and predictability was common to early experiences in the workplace. At that time, the participants believed they were making a contribution and felt connected to the organization. Doing a good job was rewarded by promotions and higher salaries. Loyalty, trust and commitment were strong values that were reciprocal between employees and employers. As the workplace changed and jobs were lost, turmoil, upheaval and fear were universally noted. Job loss was described as being cast-off—alone, lost and confused. The participants looked to outside resources for information and/or support. These resources may have helped with immediate issues such as finding a job, but did not resolve the pain and confusion of job loss. Over time, the participants examined their beliefs and universally determined that loyalty and commitment were no longer valued in the workplace. The participants demonstrated a sense of remorse as they reflected upon the past. Yet eventually, they were able to find firm ground based on long-held personal values which became their guiding light. Resolve was reached by clarifying values and committing to workplace behaviors that were consistent with personal values.

Although the values that were discussed differed among the participants, there was a common desire to have a positive influence in the workplace. The values that the participants described as currently guiding their work behaviors are: doing something significant, providing a service, helping people, being part of something worthwhile, accomplishing goals, satisfying customers, doing one's best, feeling useful, and doing work that is of value to society.

## Conclusions

The research questions ask, "How do people make meaning from the experience of job loss resulting from organizational change such as downsizing?" and "How does this new meaning influence the workplace culture?" The three theories that framed the study converge on the concept that tacit, agreed upon beliefs, assumptions and expectations underlie individual, organizational and social behavior. The agreement upon a common set of beliefs between individuals within groups is the essence of culture. Change occurs when new beliefs begin to gain general acceptance. Cultures are transformed when new values are accepted by the majority. Individuals whose behaviors are based upon old beliefs are marginalized since previously effective behaviors no longer work (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). The tacit contract that once guided both employee and employer behavior was based on the assumption that loyal employees would have secure, long-term employment (Schein, 1978). The assumptions underlying this contract changed when loyal employees lost their jobs due to organizational restructuring. As a result, people sought a way to make sense of that experience. Mezirow (1991) posits that "meaning is making sense of or giving coherence to our experiences. Meaning is interpretation" (p 11). In order for the participants to make sense of the experience of job loss it was necessary to reflect upon and revise long-held assumptions about the expectations of the current workplace culture. As a result of unprovoked job loss, it became painfully apparent to the participants of this study that the expectation of loyalty in the workplace is no longer valid.

The process of meaning making was initiated by the pain of job loss—a life-event that triggered critical reflection upon previously unexamined beliefs. Over time, critical reflection led to beliefs that were more consistent with the current situation. Today, the participants' workplace behaviors are no longer based on employee loyalty. Additionally, the participants clarified and made a commitment to personal values. Consistent with transformation theory, the participants held more open, flexible and integrative perceptions of the workplace. They no longer seek or make long-term commitments to an employer. But rather, they seek advancement opportunities outside the organization in which they currently work. They expect immediate monetary rewards for their work rather than long-term rewards such as promotions and retirement benefits. They are dedicated to continuous learning and the development of their careers as opposed to being dedicated to a single company while expecting the company to manage their development. These changes suggest a perspective transformation—the deep learning that occurs when worldviews are revised and the manner of interacting with the world is changed (Mezirow, 1991).

An interpretive (hermeneutic) analysis of transcripts revealed that the individual assumptions of the participants had many striking commonalties which led the investigator to examine the general beliefs held in the workplace. This investigation suggests that not only do discrete organizations have cultures (Schein, 1978), but the institution of work on-the-whole is a culture guided by a generalizable set of assumptions—one of which was loyalty. The analysis also indicated that this general assumption is changing. The younger generation of workers seek change—not commitment (Ragan, 1996). Further study is needed to determine if, like the participants of this study, the millions of workers who lost jobs as a result of organizational change have also revised their assumptions about loyalty in the workplace.

This research indicates that contextual change triggers critical reflection and transformed perspectives. It also demonstrates that a change in perspective can initiate a change in behavior and the way a person acts upon his or her environment. When beliefs and behaviors change among a large enough group, cultural assumptions will also change. A change in cultural assumptions is social change. The study concludes that environmental change and individual change are dynamic—the environment influences people and the people influence the environment.

## Implications for Practice

This study used job loss as an example of a disorienting dilemma which prompted individuals to critically reflect upon their situation and examine the underlying premise of loyalty that had once guided their behavior. The examination led them to the discovery that loyalty was no longer expected in the workplace. Although the examination was a struggle, the people in study eventually committed to personally determined values rather than imposed values and now behave in ways that allow them greater freedom of choice. The stories that people told about this experience follow the pattern of transformational learning—from disorienting dilemma, to critical reflection upon underlying premises, to perspective transformation. Adults are constantly bombarded with crisis events that can be caused by life changes such job loss, marriage, child birth, divorce, the death of loved ones. The adult educator in practice can help people examine their previously beliefs in order to help them achieve a broader, more discriminating, permeable, and integrative understanding of experience.

To gain insights to the influence of the job loss event and the experiences that led to perspective transformation participants of this study were asked to graph a span of time before and after job loss. The interviewer invoked discussion about the high and low points as the participant graphed them. This tool proved helpful to raising and analyzing how beliefs changed over time. Several of the participants became aware of these changes for the first time during the interview. The adult educator can utilize such tools in his or her practice to help students gain awareness of changing beliefs. Case studies of current or historical critical events could also prompt reflection upon the assumptions widely held at the time of those events. Through group discussions, differing viewpoints can be raised and educators can help people understand and value different perspectives. Such open discussions also facilitate the development of critical-thinking skills and critical reflection and enhance the ability of adults to analyze and interpret rather than merely accept past and current events. In this way, the adult education is a vehicle for sustained self-directed learning and autonomous development. Additionally, by raising unexamined beliefs the educator can plant the seeds for perspective transformation and contribute tools to empower people to behave in thoughtful rather than reactive ways.

Educators have the ability to provide knowledge, but the practice of adult education involves more than passing on knowledge. The adult educator as change agent facilitates an understanding of not just historical and social events, but an understanding of the dynamics that support or hinder societal change. This study illustrated that perspective transformation can lead to changed expectations and changed behaviors. By encouraging transformational learning among groups of adults the adult educator can become a change agent since changed behaviors among groups can influence a change in the environment

Both social policy and business issues affect the lifeworld of adults, and the work of adult educators responds to these lifeworld issues. The future that adults face in the workplace and in society is critical to the practice of adult education. It is the educator's role to respond to such issues. But also, adult education can be a major influence in shaping that future, as Spear and

Mocker (1989) concluded: "The future of adult education will take very different turns if adult educators simply wait for it to happen instead of taking action to direct its course" (p. 648). Thus, it is necessary for research in adult education to provide a knowledge base that accurately portrays the issues related to the past, current, and future contexts in which adults live and work. The participants in this study demonstrated that adults have the ability to make sense of the changes occurring in their world, but they also illustrated the lack of preparation adults have for undertaking such a difficult process. Easing the transition process could be facilitated by adult education research and a practice which helps people learn to understand and cope with change. This participants in this study became more flexible and able to understand and cope with change as a result of examining and revising their beliefs regarding the workplace.

Further studies are needed that explore the relationship between contextual change and transformational learning. This study illustrates a dynamic between changes in the workplace culture and individual perspective transformation. But only a handful of others have considered the influence of culture change on learning (Merriam & Yang, 1996; Taylor, 1994; Whalley, 1996; Williams, 1996). The existing research supports the concept that different cultures are guided by different assumptions. Thus, critical reflection upon cultural assumptions seems vital to cultural understanding and diversity studies. The ability to examine beliefs is important for travelers and sojourners to understand the guiding assumptions of the cultures they are visiting. But it is also critical to examine the assumptions of one's own culture in order to grasp an understanding of the world.

The experience of unexpected and unprovoked job loss was demonstrated to be a disorienting dilemma for the participants of the study. They had questioned the cause of their loss—What did I do wrong? Why did this happen to me? But, the answers did not lie at the problem-level of inquiry. The questions needed to be deeper—questioning the premise or the underlying assumptions. Finding answers to such questions involves critical reflection. This study indicates that analyzing the underlying assumptions that once guided behavior can lead to new expectations, revised perspectives and changed behaviors. When working with adults who are struggling with making sense of a recent life-crisis, adult educators can facilitate critical reflection by encouraging people to raise assumptions and examine expectations regarding the situation. Reflection upon such events and the previously unexamined beliefs and assumptions underlying these situations can lead adults to perspective transformation which can prompt them to act upon their environment rather than waiting for the environment to act upon them. Learning that empowers proactive behavior can help adults navigate life changes of any sort. Through interventions based upon transformation theory, adult educators can be the beacons that guide those navigating the critical events in their lives. Transformational learning provides insights into the ways that humans construct meaning and transform beliefs through a change of consciousness (Clark, 1993). The knowledge of the ways in which adults learn, positions the adult educator in the role of change agent. The profession is not one that passively conveys information from one person to another—the profession empowers people to think, communicate, and use information to create a better world.

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# Experiences of Faculty Members Who Interact with Students In an Online Environment

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## *ABSTRACT*

*This pilot study describes the experiences of higher education faculty members who interact with students in a computer-mediated conferencing environment. Using a qualitative design that resulted in a phenomenological description of emerging themes, data indicate that (1) the role of the faculty member changed to a more facilitative one, (2) personal connections are less comfortable online, (3) interactions are of a formal nature, and (4) the online environment is omnipresent but never immediate.*

## Introduction

Over the last few years there have been very rapid changes in the field of higher education due to pressures associated with widening access and developments in communication and information technologies (McDonald & Postle, 1999). A paramount initiative has been the use of computer-mediated communication technologies by higher education institutions to deliver networked support to learners on courses or programs, permitting students to interact with both peers and teachers.

The employment of computer-mediated communication technologies for online teaching is proliferating because it provides better access for learners and achieves cost-efficiencies, while at the same time maintains quality programs (Eastmond, 1998). Many universities have started offering online courses for adults with the purpose of providing convenience and flexibility as a way to support adult learners' educational opportunities. Eastmond (1998) states that "beyond its logistical advantages, the Internet holds important educational promise for engendering active and experiential learning, encouraging reflection and application, and fostering collaboration and individualized construction of meaning in learning communities" (p. 40).

With the advent of online teaching, it is important to consider faculty members' perspectives on teaching adult learners in this new environment. Many faculty members at institutions of higher education have been asked to teach online; however, little is known about how the impact of online teaching has influenced the way faculty members interact with their learners. One way to understand how faculty members experience online teaching is by studying actual online teaching situations as they unfold when faculty members reconstruct their experiences and elaborate on the meaning they assigned to those experiences.

## Purpose of the Study/Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of college faculty members who interact with students in a computer-mediated environment. The research questions for this study were:

- What does it mean for a faculty member to teach an online course?
- What are faculty members' most frequent online experiences with students?
- How does online learning impact the way faculty members communicate with students?

- How does interacting with students in the online environment impact faculty members' method of instruction and student learning?

## Definition of Terms

The context of faculty experiences is referred to as computer-mediated conferencing (CMC). CMC is part of an umbrella term that includes computer-based instruction, computer-mediated conferencing, Internet-based online instruction, and human-to-human communication in the form of e-mail and computer conferencing. It involves the use of networks of computers linked to a central host computer by local networks, telephone lines, or data networks. CMC is also defined as the process by which faculty members and students create and exchange information using networked telecommunications systems that facilitate encoding, transmitting, and decoding of messages.

## Literature Review

Technology is changing higher education. It has challenged the traditional vision of the university. Institutions of higher education used to be characterized as labor-intensive and campus based with about 90% of their students between the ages of 18 to 21 attending college on a full-time basis. Most of these students lived in campus residence halls and attended educational institutions that were organized around centralized structures formed by faculty and students at a specific place at a particular time (Connick, 1997).

In the 1970s the make up of the student population changed as a service and information economy began to replace the industrial economy (Connick, 1997). According to Connick (1997), the number of 18 year-old students started to decline and in order to sustain enrollment, colleges began to recruit adults. Consequently, the educational scene has been modified remarkably. Today "only 52 percent of college students are eighteen to twenty-one, and fewer than 15 percent fit the profile of the residential students – young, full-time, and living on campus" (p. 8).

Connick (1997) argues that "just as the American economy has moved away from the industrial model to one that is information based, technology intensive, niche oriented, and decentralized, so will education have to change" (p. 9). The developing culture based on the power and nature of information technology and telecommunications questions the role of the faculty member as the font of all knowledge and the disseminator of information. Although this is a strong form of pedagogy in traditional higher education, it has been criticized because it creates passive learners (Belenky, et al., 1986; Brookfield, 1990; Freire, 1993). This type of didactic instruction, which has been characterized as "sage on the stage," has been replaced by the "guide on the side" (Baldwin, 1998). This new conception of the faculty's role moves away from the source of authority and knowledge (McDonald & Postle, 1999) to an individual who plays a supportive role as students learn (Gillespie, 1998).

## Methodology

The research method was grounded in a phenomenological framework to explore the phenomenon of online interactions as the faculty members experience it. Phenomenology is concerned with the nature of the phenomenon as meaningfully experienced (van Manen, 1990). In this type of study, phenomenological questions are meaning questions. They question the significance of the phenomena. Our rationale for choosing this approach is based on our orientation to this study as adult educators. Conducting a phenomenological study helps us understand how faculty members perceive their teaching experiences in the online environment. We in turn become better prepared as we enter this environment both as educators ourselves and in our efforts to support faculty.

The research design and methodological procedures used for this pilot study were based on van Manen's (1990) approach to qualitative research methodology in education. For van Manen (1990), the essential model of this approach is "textual reflection on the lived experiences and practical actions of everyday life with the intent to increase one's thoughtfulness and practical resourcefulness or tact" (p. 4).

We used a purposeful sampling through the method of analytic induction. Four faculty participants were selected from a Midwestern university, based on their experiences as faculty members teaching in an online environment. All were seasoned educators, but represented a range of online experience. One was a novice in the online environment while another had taught primarily online. One of the participants had previously taught in distance education using the medium of instructional video. A fourth faculty person was involved in an early Department of Defense online project.

Data were collected using semi-structured open-ended interviews conducted on-site. Our task as interviewers was "to build upon and explore participants' responses to [the research] questions" (Seidman, 1998, p. 9). The goal was to have participants reconstruct their experiences within the topic under study. The interview protocol was adapted from Seidman's (1998) in-depth, phenomenologically based interviewing process. This method involved (1) establishment of the context of the participants' experience, (2) participants' reconstruction of the details of their experience within the context in which it occurred, and (3) participants' reflection on the meaning their experience held for them (Seidman, 1998).

After completing all interviews, we analyzed the interview data by organizing excerpts from the transcripts into categories, and looked for connected threads and patterns among the excerpts within those categories and for connections between the various categories (Seidman, 1998). We used the selective or highlighting reading approach to isolate the thematic statements. This approach consisted of reading a text several times and asking if the statement or phrases seem particularly essential to or revealing about the phenomenon or experience being described (van Manen, 1990).

## Findings

Four themes emerged from the accounts recalled by the interviewed faculty members: (1) facilitative role; (2) personal connectedness; (3) formality of communication; and (4) sense of omnipresence of the class. These themes described the "essence" of their experiences interacting with students in a CMC environment.

Facilitative Role. Each of the faculty members we interviewed identified a preferred role in the teaching/learning relationship as "facilitator," however they found that the CMC environment pushed that position to the extreme. Their stories show a keen awareness…and appreciation of their displacement from the center of instruction to the sidelines. In contrast to face-to-face discussions where all the comments would typically be directed to them, online conversation proved much more learner-to-learner focused. Discussion moves to whomever next logs on.

> Claudia's Account: A Community of Learners – *"If you don't have learners participating, it is not teaching. When I see people coming online, I am happy. They are forming a community in that learning space."*

In the online environment Claudia noted that she is much more aware of a collaborative atmosphere. She structures her online courses using adult learning principles. She stated, "to get students to share their experience… you have to design to build in collaboration. I do case studies, debate, looking at what kinds of activities that would give a focus, real world situations, practical focus and application of principles to practice. They are important elements to bring to class."

Claudia considers the role of the online instructor one of a facilitator, someone who looks at problems, asks students if they are having technical difficulties, and guides people to be on track. According to her, some of the tasks an online instructor performs include encouragement, analysis of the situation, and summarizing of responses.

But since students post comments to the class or their sub-group rather than directly to the teacher in this environment, she expressed tentativeness about intervening prematurely. She described her engagement in online conversation as an intuitive activity. Claudia explained, "knowing how much I should post is something I struggle with because one of my goals is to have students interact with each other. But sometimes I have to wait until everyone else responds because otherwise they will respond to me not each other." She said, "I often have to sit on my hands." Her online teaching experience is based on personal judgement, looking at the overall context.

Personal Connectedness. Instructors most frequently described their interactions in terms of relating to the group as a whole. Individual identities were not well differentiated. A group identity formed much more easily in the CMC environment rather than providing an opportunity to "get to know" students on a "personal" basis. However there was a considerable range of experience on this theme. One instructor lamented, "They all just became an e-mail address." In contrast, another stated that her overall experience was one where "real personal and human connections are being made." Daniel's ambivalence, described below, exemplifies the struggle to "humanize" the face of the machine.

> Daniel: *"I don't think that the best use of online interaction is outside of a personal relationship, so I think that it's important to have some form of personal knowledge, personal interaction, and personal connection with people."*

Daniel explained that he uses a "combined strategy" of online interaction plus face-to-face meetings within the context of the class. Although he noted that he was one of the pioneers in CMC, having led a Department of Defense project in the mid-eighties, he remained reluctant to rely entirely on CMC to establish the kind of personal trust he so evidently values. It was as if he stood a little outside of the lion's den of the CMC environment, not fully entering a place he considered perilous for personal relationships.

However as he sees demand increasing for fully online courses, he said that he is trying to develop his understanding of the person in a variety of ways. For example, "through what the person says and also how [he or she] says it and the side bar communication that occurs one-on-one and also in a group. Over time that builds certain sorts of connections between people who I think contribute a lot to the outcome of the course. So, with online [instruction] what I try to do is establish that personal connection."

Formality of Communication. Interactions were of a formal nature: "documented," "succinct," "pithy." Clarity of language, defined as logical structure, was most valued. The emotional dimension of a message was usually either lost or misinterpreted. The nuances of humor and confrontation proved particularly difficult to convey without facial expression, body language or intonation.

> Laura: Communicating in the Electronic Box – *"It's so interesting that you can feel the students sitting in front of what is essentially this cold little electronic box..."*

Laura attributed the online environment with "helping [her] focus on how critical communication is in the learning process. It's brought that into a pretty crystal clear perspective as the focus of the whole learning process." She described "learning and teaching as balancing on this little fulcrum of communication."

While she acknowledged occasional frustration with the words of conversation being misinterpreted online, she framed it in terms of a continuum of getting to know a person over time and through a series of interactions. In Laura's words, "Online I really try to conscientiously say things in a way that cannot be misinterpreted and that I'm not stepping on toes, especially in the first few interactions, until I have a better sense of whether I can be a little more casual with this person. I think I'm a little more gingerly in my approach to online communications with learners."

Rather than seeing the need to be extremely careful with language as an obstacle to online interactions, Laura expressed this condition of the environment as a welcome discipline. She derided herself for speaking too fast in person and "not as clearly as I should.... Having these online conversations, I'm able to say something that is a little more meaningful." Laura said her most frequent experience online is coaxing her students to "dig a little deeper...so that there's more meaning" in their discussions. She values connectedness in the conversation, not just off-the-cuff comments. When advising or providing feedback to students, she believed it was of additional benefit that they could "refer back to the conversation [because] it was documented and memorialized in print."

Sense of Omnipresence of the Class. In a computer-mediated conference, faculty members enter an environment where their interactions with students are omnipresent but never immediate. The discussion is always "there" just a click away, but response time is random. The experience is described variously as "overwhelming" or as a welcome change of pace from "turning on my voice for 50 minutes."

> Barbara: *"Get a life!"*

The experience often felt overwhelming in terms of the number of comments to keep up with and the fact that it was on-going. "Unlike class where you're only going to be there for three hours and the preparation is somewhat contained, every time you sat down at your computer someone else had said something." Barbara acknowledged that she didn't have to switch into the discussion, but curiosity "sucked her in." She was surprised at the number of people who would post lengthy messages at 2:00 and 3:00 in the morning. Her reaction was, "Get a life!" Several times in the semester the instructors put a freeze on messages just to turn it off for a while.

Barbara's experiece was echoed by the other interviewees who each commented on the amount of time it took to review all the postings in a class. While Daniel said he enjoyed "checking in frequently…to see how things were going," Laura related that "it's difficult to remember what you said by the time a student responds."

## Discussion

As the literature points out, American higher education is changing not only in form but also in the nature of interactions between faculty and students (Connick, 1997). Our findings indicate that the online environment changes traditional didactic pedagogy to the facilitative role favored by Belenky et al. (1986), Brookfield (1990), Freire (1993), Gillespie (1998), and McDonald & Postle (1999). As one instructor revealed, "I'm not sure just when I realized I was not as dominant intentionally or unintentionally." Our other findings are not clearly addressed in the current literature. Using van Manen's (1990) approach to qualitative research yielded rich descriptions of the nature of interactions that may not be related in other types of studies. The formality of communication described by participants seemed to contribute to the dilemma they found establishing personal connections online. The emotional dimension of a message was usually either lost or misinterpreted. The nuances of humor and confrontation proved particularly difficult to convey without facial expression, body language or intonation. On the other hand, the formality of online interactions enabled easier and quicker assessment of students' understanding of the content.

The faculty persons we interviewed experienced a continuous presence of the class. However, while "the class" is omnipresent, response time is random. This alters the rhythm of interaction, replacing immediacy with an asynchronous experience.

## Conclusion

This pilot study describes some of the anxieties and successful experiences that faculty members have encountered when teaching online. Studying the meaning of these experiences can be beneficial to those who have not explored the online teaching environment, but may be encouraged through the experiences of others. While this study represents the experiences of faculty members interacting with students via CMC, it also serves as a starting point to study online teaching from the faculty members' perspective.

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# **"Goin' Down the Road": Learning at the Edge of Social Movements for Cultural and Ecological Sustainability**

Regina Curry, Shu-chuan Liao, Gerri Outlaw, and Jan Woodhouse

## Abstract

This paper has been constructed by four women, self-described as co-learners and scholar/practitioner/activists. These women represent a variety of cultures and have worked with and/or studied social movements related to cultural and environmental sustainability in urban and rural areas in Africa, India, Latin America, Taiwan and the United States. This discussion will address practitioner concerns regarding: What are the characteristics of the learning that takes place at the edge of social movements? How are these characteristics manifested in social movements related to environmental issues? What is the role of research in these initiatives?

## Introduction

*I'm goin' down the road feelin' bad,*
*I'm goin' down the road feelin' bad,*
*I'm goin' down the road feelin' bad,*
*Lord, Lord,*
*And I ain't gonna be treated thisaway.*

*I'm goin' where the dust storms never blow,*
*I'm goin' where the dust storms never blow,*
*I'm goin' where the dust storms never blow,*
*Lord, Lord,*
*And I ain't gonna be treated thisaway.*

This song, "Goin' Down the Road", was sung by sharecroppers during the 1930s and expresses both the courage and the despair of rural peoples facing environmental catastrophe. Lands in the central United States had been so mismanaged to support supply needs during WWI that there was no soil structure to maintain either moisture or nutrients — the soils literally dried up and blew away. "Goin' Down the Road" was adopted by city and farmworkers who were organizing unions to protect themselves from poor wages and eviction. The politics of place and displacement contributing to the calamity of the Dust Bowl Era, remain at the root of environmental degradation today. The resolution of environmental problems that threaten cultural and ecological sustainability is still being negotiated through social movements world-wide. These movements usually begin as local initiatives: rural, loosely organized, unfunded, generated from and dependent on the actions of those affected by the problem. They may evolve to be regional, national, or multi-national in scope, technologically based, funded by government and/or corporate interests and administrated by specially trained persons who probably aren't directly or immediately affected by the problem (Woodhouse, 1998). These movements involve education as an agent of change on a multitude of levels.

### What are the characteristics of the learning that takes place at the edge of social movements?

Learning at the edge of social movements takes place in the community and wherever there is a need to interpret the world into everyday language. Learning at the edge of social movements defines community as it relates to cultural understanding and acknowledges that there are several forms of culture in marginalized communities. Knowledge is created or indigenous knowledge is applied to increase self-reliance. Most importantly, perhaps, learning occurs from one-on-one experiences with other members of the community. The dialogical approach to organizing and problem solving is popular (Curry, 1998).

Another characteristic Curry describes is that there seems to be a "defining moment" in the learner's experience — that moment when a commitment to actively struggle for social change is made and when the struggle is transformed from a personal to a social goal. Curry describes one such moment for a woman from Chicago's South Side, "It was like something wouldn't let me walk away. It would not let me rehab the building, rent it out and walk away. It was just something that wouldn't let me do that. It was and still is an emotional experience" (Curry, 1999). Defining moments like this one mean that it was poor people who began to see housing and transportation issues in a different way than city planners. People were learning to control their environment, to look at things differently, to turn negative forces into positive forces that would become the resources needed to turn their lives around.

The case studies summarized here are exemplary of several patterns:

- The intention of the social movement is to change or block a force that threatens something of value to the person and/or community. The learning that takes place for that to happen is initially an ancillary activity.
- The most successful efforts at resolving acute environmental problems initially evolve from a context, begin locally, and are limited in scope.
- Women initiate most of the social movements for ecological and cultural sustainability.
- Most of the women in these programs have to learn skills to overcome problems they did not create. This learning is informal.
- One of the first skills that they learn is how to get their voices acknowledged and respected. Once women find they are listened to, the self-concept of the individual or group strengthens, and the empowerment process begins. Empowerment increases agency.
- Action precedes "education". Despite all the religious, legal, and ancient cultural traditions that restrict women's agency in some parts of the world, when there is a crisis, they act. They organize and act, or they act independently and then they organize. The crisis gives them permission to ignore convention. Once the initial crisis has been resolved, women stay involved to address the problem(s) that provoked the crisis. At this point the need for more formal education may be recognized.
- Local efforts become catalysts for broader efforts.

**How are these characteristics manifested in social movements related to cultural and environmental issues?**

The following summaries of selected case studies are exemplary of the above characteristics. Most of the women described never took a course in social movement theory or read any of the research included in this paper. They did, however, experience a "defining moment", as Curry describes, where enough was enough — and they took some kind of action: They began where they were, used what they had and did what they could. Then they were in a new position to begin again, to take the next step.

## AFRICA

- **Kenya: The Green Belt Movement**

Africa has lost one-half of its forests in this century to cash-crop plantations and firewood. On World Environment Day, June 5, 1977, Wangar Maathai went out into her backyard and planted seven trees — and she got an idea. Maathai launched an appeal to Kenya's farmers, a majority of whom are women, to plant protective "green belts" of trees. She eventually persuaded the Kenyan subsidiary of Mobil Oil and other international philanthropies to fund the establishment of indigenous tree nurseries. She enlisted the help of school children to plant and care for the trees. When children took the message home to their parents, other women's groups became interested in the effort. Today, there are one thousand tree nurseries located in rural areas with local staffs supervising, distributing tools and training people to collect and plant seeds. About three thousand schools, with an average of five hundred children per school, have been involved (Wallace, 1993).

## ASIA

- **Taiwan: Homemakers Establish Community-Based Environmental Programs**

In 1987 a group of women (mostly homemakers) decided that they had a responsibility to stop the deterioration of the environment for their children and community. The first action organized was "Garbage Sorting and Recycling." This effort started from the community in which Wang Pao-tze, the founder of Homemakers Union and Foundation, lived. She went to each family in her community, asked them to participate, and showed them how to sort garbage. This simple and effective way to reduce the amount of the garbage that would otherwise end up in incinerators or landfills caught the attention of the media. From this root, the movement has grown to include organizing to enact environmental laws, creating green walks for the community in Taipei City to help residents better understand and make policy about the environments in which they live, and organizing cooperative buying programs (which by 1999 included 3000 members) to consolidate the consumers' buying power and to build solidarity among consumers, producers, and the land. Liao emphasizes that community-based education encourages dialogue between the community residents and the activists and makes a place for the creation of knowledge by ordinary people based on their life-world (Liao, 1999).

## INDIA

- **The Narmada Valley Project**

Medha Patkar, a social worker, investigated the development projects of the World Bank in the Narmada Valley that called for the construction of 30 major dams on the Narmada River and its tributaries. Despite World Bank and engineers' claims to the contrary, Patkar saw the inevitable and potential eco-catastrophies and the social disruption that this project would cause. Ninety-two thousand acres of fertile fields and forests would be submerged. One hundred thousand tribal peoples in 245 villages would lose all or most of their land. The lands and lives of thousands more would be impacted. And, while the project plans called for these people to be "resettled and rehabilitated", Patkar knew this meant that most of them would end up in urban slums or working as migrant laborers in the sugar-cane fields. She went out into villages of the region to organize and educate. The Narmada Project was eventually a catalyst to organize the country's environmental groups. Patkar became a key leader raising social justice issues such as, "Who pays and who benefits?" Finally, after testimonies before the U.S. Congress and the World

Bank, the World Bank has stopped its plans to fund one of the large dams. The Japanese government withdrew its funding, and members of the European community urged the World Bank to stop financing the project altogether (Wallace, 1996).

## UNITED STATES

- **Chicago South Side: Protest, Process, Policy**

Since black fur trapper and explorer, Jean Baptise duSable, founded Chicago in the late 18th century, African-Americans have been an integral part of its story and of the social movements that accompanied the development of this city. With the ending of slavery, a stable Black community developed on Chicago's south side — the "Black Belt." Despite the contribution of significant religious, economic and cultural elements by people of color, Chicago remains one of the most racially segregated cities in the United States. Race and poverty shape the experiences of nearly one-half its residents, especially African-Americans, as a result of exclusion from the social, economic, and political processes. Local resistance to unfair, exclusionary, and exploitive practices on the south side of Chicago have manifested in the organization of Block Clubs. These groups have been effective in confronting "urban removal" projects, believed by many to have been initiated to disband communities of color. One example of this occurred when the Chicago school board decided to alleviate overcrowding with trailers or "Willis Wagons", as they were called, named after the Chicago School District Superintendent. Rosie Simpson, a mother and resident of the south side community of Englewood, helped the community fight this initiative. People came from all over the city to protest. While the bulldozers were poised to dig up the land to set up the school of trailers, the residents and supporters sat down in the mud and chained themselves to the bulldozers (Curry, 1998).

- **Chicago: The Lives of Young Girls Project**

AIDS deaths across the United States are declining, but examination of the demographics of this research reveals that only certain racial/ethnic groups are benefiting from HIV therapies. For example, since 1989, the percent of AIDs cases among females has almost doubled and the cases of pediatric AIDS are also on the rise. In response to these realities and the research on factors which contribute to STD infection rates, teen pregnancy, and teens as victims of violent crime, individuals and community agencies in the Austin area of Chicago have cooperatively developed and supported a program to provide young girls with the education they need to control what happens to their bodies. The "Lives of Young Girls Project" is an HIV/AIDS education and prevention program targeted at girls, ages 13-18 in the Austin community area. The program model is characteristic of feminist organizing strategies and is based on the ideology of empowerment through consciousness raising. This program differs from others in that the experiences of the daily life of girls in Austin form the foundation for the preventative effort. By examining the nature of their lives, girls and young women can begin to understand the commonality of their experience and its connection to community and social issues. This program recruits and trains young girls to recruit and train their peers about self efficacy, empowerment, goal-setting and making conscious life choices to improve the quality of life and reduce the risks to HIV/AIDs (Outlaw, 1998).

### What is the role of research in these initiatives?

The role of research in these social movements is not always clear, and therein lies one of our major concerns as practitioners. Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter and Wangari (1996) present the most comprehensive review of research exploring the global scale of social movements for ecological and cultural sustainability (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter and Wangari, 1996). Beder (1989) traces the history of the adult education enterprise from the "liberal" theories through the "progressives" and to the human-growth potential traditions. Most learning at the edge of social movements today is a variation on these themes (Savignon, 1993). Outlaw (1998) synthesizes the research on empowerment characteristic of feminist organizing strategies, emphasizing empowerment as a process of increasing personal, interpersonal, or political power so individuals can take action to improve their lives (Bricker-Jenkins and Hooyman, 1986; Gould, 1987; Gutierrez, 1990; Kieffer, 1984; Longress and McLeod, 1980; Pinderhughes, 1983).

Recognizing the way in which power relationships affect daily reality and understanding how individuals can contribute to social change is the process through which empowerment takes place (Friere, 1970; Gutierrez, 1990). Empowerment increases agency. Agency determines what control the individual has on history. This idea is consistent with Matthias Finger's conception of the impact of the new social movements on adult education, looking at shifts in the intent of the aims of the enterprise and the place of transformation. He claims that what happens to the adult in this enterprise is "mainly informal, local, and communitarian, based on concern, commitment, and experience, rooted in and contributing to the development of a local culture" (Finger, 1989, p. 19). Giroux, of course, presents a multidimensional analysis of adult pedagogy and represents conceptions of social justice, rights, and entitlement as central to the struggle for radical democratic politics. The new spaces created through this struggle may be a result of, and will certainly allow, the border crossings that characterize effective social movements (Giroux, (1992). Boggs (1986), Collins (1995), Anderson (1998), and Brookfield (1998) are more critical of the claims made about the attributes of the adult education enterprise and the success of the participatory process.

While this research is helpful to critical analysis of social movements, it is not clear that this research is responsible for the emergence of social movements or informs the learning at the edge of social movements. The authors of this paper concur with Shiva that these movements are succeeding because of the visions and actions of exceptionally courageous women/people with ecological insights and political and moral strengths (Shiva, 1988) — not because of academic discourse. Where, then, do the philosophers/researchers and the practitioners meet in these enterprises? What could each learn from the other? How might those learnings increase the effectiveness of social movements? And, could these learnings become part of the "edge" phenomena?

## Conclusion

Based on an examination of actual case studies, the authors conclude that most communities mobilize to learn for self-reliance. Bottom up leadership is possible when the conditions are right. Poor people construct their learning by taking advantage of their own cultural tools. Sophisticated organic intellectuals committed to their class produce and disseminate their own knowledge gained from a critical examination of their experience. Adult education is a part of nearly every effort for cultural and ecological sustainability around the world. Much of it emerges at the edge of social movements. Social movements, especially those organized by women, are challenging the prevailing ideology of development and insisting that history be rewritten to include the stories of the poverty, pollution, population and peripheralization that has characterized global development efforts (Shiva, 1988).

The case studies summarized here are only a small percent of what is going on globally. People are taking actions in whatever way they can to make sure that change processes are equitable, efficient, ecological and endogenous (from within). The stories of the learning that takes place at the edge of these movements must be told. These stories relay hope. They relay the knowledge, skills and values that are part of the empowerment process. They extinguish the myth that the environmental movement is a white, middle class effort — because the reality is that the solutions to these problems are being forged by people of all colors, all classes, everywhere . . . just "going down the road" because they "ain't gonna be treated thisaway."

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# An Exploration of Electronic Discussion as an Adult Learning Strategy

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## *ABSTRACT*

*The purpose of this study was to explore the use of electronic discussion as a teaching strategy for adult students. Over 450 adult student contributions to electronic discussions were analyzed to extrapolate learning processes, group processes and faculty role. Results indicate that learning progressed to a high analytical level during electronic discussion and that group process development facilitated learning as well.*

A major question to be addressed by the field of adult education is: *"What impact do new technological teaching strategies have on the learning of adult students?"* The delivery of adult education through on-line courses, web-based instruction, reflector groups, and web-based conferencing is exploding. Yet, research is only beginning to examine the impact this technology has on adult learning. For example, Milton, Davis & Watkins (1999) looked at the interactions that occurred within small groups in an asynchronous web-based distance learning environment and found that virtual learning communities developed when there was a fusion of the learning processes and group dynamics. Rheingold (1994) indicated that the potential anonymity of virtual communities contributes to learners feeling that "virtual communities treat them as they always wanted to be treated – as thinkers and transmitters of ideas and feeling beings" (p. 26). Chester and Gwynne (1998) found that two-thirds of the students in an on-line course rated their participation in the subject matter as greater than in a face-to-face course. Finally, Milton and Wilson (1999) indicated that "the analysis of these small groups (in a computer-mediated environment) has taught us that the additional dimensions of time and space supported through collaborative technology increase the complexity of the learning and the interdependence of the processes and people involved" (pg. 7). These previous studies indicate a great need for additional information on the effectiveness of learning through the use of technology.

### Conceptual Framework.

Constructivist learning theory provided the overall conceptual framework for this study. Constructivist learning theory holds that "learners actively construct and reconstruct knowledge out of their experiences in the world" (Kafai and Resnik, 1996, p. 3). Knowledge construction takes place when learners actively construct knowledge through intellectual engagement and investment in personally meaningful tasks. Constructivists believe that individuals learn through their experience and that meaning is rooted in that experience. The key to learning, in a constructivist framework, is for the learner to find multiple ways to link new information to previous experience. Lambert et al. (1995) refer to constructivism as the epistemological processes of knowing and coming to know (p. 17). Within a constructivist framework learners create their own knowledge by how they put their worlds together. In other words, constructivists focus on the connections that the learner is making between ideas. Novak (1998) believes that learning occurs through a process of assimilating concepts into the cognitive structures by either subsuming concepts under each other, by progressively differentiating concepts from each other or by reconciling the similarities between concepts. The crucial element is that the learner actively creates a knowledge base through the linkages and the experiences. "The design task, therefore, is one of providing a rich context within which meaning can be negotiated and ways of understanding can emerge and evolve" (Hannafin, et. al, 1997, p. 109). For this study, graduate courses were designed and implemented from a constructivist framework. Electronic discussion was viewed as a teaching strategy to facilitate constructivist learning.

**Research questions**

The purpose of this study was to analyze one component of technological teaching strategies, electronic discussion groups, with an adult student population. The following research questions were advanced to guide this inquiry: 1. In an electronic discussion, what learning processes do adult learners utilize? 2. In an electronic discussion, how do group processes develop? 3. How does the faculty role change when using electronic discussion?

**Methodology**

Electronic discussion was used as a teaching methodology in four adult education graduate courses offered within a master's degree program in adult education at a major Midwestern university. Courses activities were designed to offer the learner an opportunity to develop knowledge and beliefs related to course content, integrate experiences, and ultimately reflect on and assess their own level of learning. Electronic discussions were used in each course to analyze case studies, discuss course readings, and reflect on learning achieved during the course. All courses were taught by the same instructor.

A total of 52 individuals participated in the electronic discussions analyzed for the purpose of this study; 76% were female and 24 % were male. The majority of students enrolled in the courses reviewed in this study had used some form of electronic discussion previously.

Following the completion of the four courses, over 450 adult student discussion contributions were analyzed using a constant comparative method of analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1973). Each individual learner contribution was treated as a separate unique piece of data. All learner contributions were reviewed and category themes extracted. Data from all the contributions were then coded into a qualitative data analysis software program using the category themes developed. A system of matrices was then designed to analyze each research question under study. One matrix depicted data descriptive of learning processes, one matrix depicted data descriptive of group processes, and one matrix depicted data demonstrating faculty role.

**Findings**

The findings from this study will be presented in three areas: 1. learning processes, 2. group process and, 3. faculty role in electronic discussions.

*Learning Processes.* Data indicate that adult students, in these courses, used four different learning processes during an electronic discussion. These processes were labeled engaging, developing conceptual relationships, drawing conclusions, and reflecting and self-evaluating.

First, an engagement process developed where the adult learner used multiple and varied strategies to gain comfort with the technology. During this engagement process it was common to receive messages that stated, "I have never done this before but here goes." Adult learners not only engaged with the technology in this phase, but they needed to "get over the technology hump." They would send messages multiple times to make sure that they were received, they would switch Internet providers and change services as they discovered how the technology worked and they would initially engage with the technology to chat, plan snacks and meals for class, and clarify course assignments.

Second, the adult learners began developing conceptual relationships with the course content under study by: a. linking and differentiating concepts; b. engaging in dialogue linked to their own and their colleagues experiences, and, c. evaluating colleague comments. Each of these three processes were seen within each course, in the same sequence.

Linking. Learners initially used the electronic discussion to link and differentiate concepts. This process was most often initiated by a leaner who linked concepts from two-three course readings. Once this linking happened a different learner responded and further clarified or expanded on the connected ideas. For example, a student enrolled in a continuing professional education course stated:

> *Schon's work on reflecting in action, Mezirow's work on transformation theory and Brookfield's work involving critical thinking combine into an interesting look at how we might get outside our own minds and see our thoughts and feelings as magnificent contrivances of the world rather than as the only way that things can be. Each work deals with bewilderment and intellectual vertigo but differ in where they place emphasis of work within the topsy-turvery world of our brains.*

> Following this a second learner stated:
> *I feel compelled to reply to J. She did such a splendid job of discussion of Schon/Mezirow/Brookfield. Now for a little perspective from my view of the reading.*

Dialogue. Next the learner's ability to create a dialogue that linked to their own experience developed. In this phase the learners seemed to move away from the focus on their readings and move to a discussion of their own experiences as related to their colleagues' experiences. For example in this phase learners stated:

> *So rather than questioning the role of CPE in fostering these concepts, I question the role of the organizations sending their employees to the CPE programs. Do some of your corporations have a defined policy or process whereby employees can propose changes base on new learning from CPE? In my experience of a hospital setting, it seems to me that most changes come from the top and only the free and easy suggestions from the lower ranks are easy to implement.*

During this dialogue phase, learners attempted to understand and create meaning. As such, learners often made the following type of comment.

> *I've just printed and re-read everyone's comment in the last week. Besides helping me better understand what I've read, I've really thought about everyone's examples.*

This leaner then went on to link colleague comments together, provide a summary of the discussion to date and to add her own new comments that moved the dialogue even further.

Evaluating. It was interesting to note that in each group analyzed for this study, there was a point where one learner took the risk to disagree or challenge the thinking of a student colleague. Sometimes these challenges were subtle such as, "in thinking about Hs comments I am not sure I agree with her full assessment, my ideas take me in a different direction." At other times the challenge was more direct. For example in a leadership course the students were discussing the movie Norma Rae. One student characterized the movie's main character as a transactional leader. Another student took exception with this and wrote a detailed analysis of transactional versus transformational leadership and challenged the first interpretation as not linked to the course materials or content. This challenge spurred the rest of the group to analyze leadership theories in much more depth. Once that challenge happened, the group moved to yet another level of learning; drawing conclusions.

In the third level of learning, adult students used knowledge to draw conclusions and make decisions. For example, students were discussing the importance training within a business environment. They had discussed both the role of management and the role of training. One learner used this discussion to frame a work related decision as follows:

> *More and more I believe HRD people must be very business focused, not only in their approach to training but how they manage themselves and departments. . . The decision to use CBLs as the training tool for new employees may not be the best solution but there are so many aspects to consider. Our company has over 100 employees. Their orientation, training, etc. is solely in the hand of managers. I would score huge brownie points if I delivered a CD ROM with an overview of the company and executive welcome, but I won't because I do not believe that training is the root cause for 50% turnover.*

Finally, some groups reached a fourth level of learning that included a reflection and self-evaluation process. In these groups, learners would share changes in their own thinking, changes in their world views and meta-cognitive processes they used in learning. For example consider the student who indicated:

> *Why is it important to be situated in an authentic activity? I will give you an example via a problem I solved while I read the articles on situated cognition. I believe that I have finally figured out - "Why do the professors always want us to include in our papers the implications of what it is we are studying or alleging through our analysis?" Well, obvious as the answer may seem to you - I have always been bothered by it. First of all, since I am currently not an educator I often could not think of any implications for the field of education. . . . Now, I realize that because I am not situated in an education field I have completely backward perception of these exercises. Also the word implication got in the way for me. My business background led me to want to think about situations as having to have a cause and effect. When I could not say this could cause that I did not have an implications worth writing down. Well, I have been transformed. I don't believe the task of compiling implications is a cause/effect assignment anymore . . . I consider the thinking exercise of realizing implications as a way to hone my tools as a student. Therefore I can let my thinking lead me to the implications and then let the implications lead me to future study. So not I just don't study about situated cognition I try to live in the idea of it.*

*Group Processes.* Data indicated that the group processes seemed to be similar to group processes that develop in face-to-face instruction. Group atmospheres were cordial, communication patterns seemed to be linked and nested, participation patterns included all learners, and group norms seemed to develop. In one group, for example, the discussion norm seemed to be that before entering the discussion on a particular topic, the learner first needed to develop their own written statement of understanding before it was acceptable to comment on a colleague's view. Additionally, level of participation in an electronic discussion was a group norm that developed. In some groups the level of participation was extremely high and the group seemed to push each other for more and more contact. In other groups a moderate level of participation developed and the group norm was not as demanding. Groups also developed ways to tease, have fun and "joke around" on line. These findings are similar to that of Milton, Davis and Watkins (1999) who in their study of virtual learning communities, noted that "each group engaged in their own set of behaviors and established a unique identity that was largely the result of the group dynamics. . . The two issues that seemed to be critical but that detracted from the performance of the groups were agreement of an acceptable level of participation and engagement with the group" (p. 5).

*Faculty Role.* Electronic discussion fostered a change in the faculty role. The faculty role tended to be one of electronically summarizing and linking comments made by learners. This summarization and linking process appeared to be most helpful to the groups once they had engaged in dialogue about their own experiences. One interesting finding of this study was that if the faculty member entered the discussion too early, then the learners talked to the faculty member as the authority figure. However, if the faculty member waited and entered the discussion after colleague relationships had been established between learners, then the faculty member could enter the discussion and the group would treat them as a group member rather than as the authority figure.

**Implications for practice**

This study has implications for the practice of adult education, as well as, further research in the field. First, adult education practitioners will benefit from a greater understanding of how technology facilitates the learning process. It was evident in this study that the learners moved through learning processes of engagement, developing conceptual relationships, drawing conclusions, and reflection and self-evaluation. The electronic discussion format fostered the learners taking a more analytical and reflective approach to their own learning. A number of factors could have contributed to this high level of analysis and synthesis in learning. First, a constructivist approach was used in designing the discussion format and group activities. Learners were asked to focus on connections with content and analysis of experiences. Second, the technology provided the learner the ability to read colleagues' comments, print those comments, go back to course materials and integrate these materials with their colleagues comments, think about what it meant and then, ultimately frame their response. Learners who participated in electronic discussions felt that they used a "more thoughtful" process in framing responses. They also indicated, "You know, there is a record of the things we say, so I think we are accountable in a different way for our ideas than we are in a classroom discussion." A major teaching/learning issue raised by this study, is what course content/activities are best suited for electronic discussion and which are best suited for classroom discussion. It appears that adult educators will need to address this issue in their consideration of the use of discussion formats within courses.

Second, this study has implications for further research. The author considers this to be an initial, preliminary exploration, and the field would benefit from its replication and expansion. Additionally, future research is needed to understand learning processes that develop in computer-mediated environments. For example, the field would benefit from understanding more about the connections between specific technologies, instructional design, learning process, context, and facilitators. What impact do each of these have on the learner in a technology enhanced environment?

As adult educators, we need to move beyond using technology because it is available, exciting, new and unique. We need to ask ourselves, "If I use this technology will it have an impact on learning and how will that impact occur?" As Chester and Gwynne (1998) indicate, "We can not assume that the skills and pedagogy of face-to-face teaching will be appropriate in cyberspace. We have to be open to change and open to the lessons, both in their delights and their dangers, that teaching on line can offer" (pg. 9).

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# Learning and Context:
# Connections in Continuing Professional Education

Barbara J. Daley and Merryl Carlsson

### *Abstract*

*This qualitative interpretivist study analyzed the interrelationships between professional practice, the knowledge gained in continuing professional education programs, and the context of employment. Sixty semi-structured, tape-recorded interviews were conducted with social workers, lawyers, and nurses who had attended continuing education programs nine-24 months previously. Findings indicate that professionals construct a knowledge base by moving back and forth between continuing professional education programs and their professional practice. This process of knowledge construction was affected by elements of the structural, human resources, political and symbolic frames of the contexts in which professionals were employed. Implications for further research in continuing professional education are drawn.*

## Problem Statement

The intricate, elaborate, and dynamic relationship among learning, context, and professional work is one that has recently begun to be explored from a new perspective. Research in the transfer of knowledge (Broad & Newstron, 1992), adoption of innovation (Hall & Loucks, 1981; Lockyer, 1991), and diffusion of innovation (Rogers, 1995) has laid the groundwork for the study of learning and context. However, in these frameworks, research questions have asked how does knowledge learned in one location get transferred or applied in a different location. The complexities inherent in the transfer process have led researchers to attempt to simplify their studies by looking at transfer, adoption, and application as linear, one-way processes of translating information into professional practice.

More recently however, researchers and program planners (Black & Schell, 1995; Eraut,1994; Gray-Murray, 1994; Grzyb, 1997; Kozlowski, 1995) have begun to understand that professionals engage in a more interactive process with the context of their practice and tend to combine elements of the context, information from continuing education, and experience in practice to construct their own individual knowledge base, rather than to follow a simple transfer process. Even though researchers have begun to question the relationships between knowledge presented in continuing education programs (CPE) and the use of that knowledge at the work site, the missing element is still a comprehensive, holistic assessment of the interrelationships between the learner, the knowledge generated within the educational program, the components of professional practice, and the context of organizations in which professional are employed.

The purpose of this paper is to describe a research study that emanated from questions raised about the value of CPE programs. The use of knowledge in professional practice is an important issue within the field of adult education because billions of dollars are spent on CPE programs without a clear understanding of the outcomes of the learning or the connections between learning and the context of practice.

## Theoretical Framework

The interrelationships of three major concepts; knowledge, context, and professional practice were explored in this study. Knowledge, for the purpose of this study, was viewed as a social construction of information that occurred through a process of constructivist learning and perspective transformation. Constructivist's (Ausubel, 1986, 1978; Brunner, 1990; Dewey, 1938; Novak, 1998; Novak & Gowin, 1984; Piaget, 1971) believe that individuals create knowledge by linking new information with past experiences. Within a constructivist framework, the learner progressively differentiates concepts into more and more complex understandings and also reconciles abstract understanding with concepts garnered from previous experience. New knowledge is made meaningful by the ways in which the learner establishes connections among knowledge learned, previous experiences, and the context in which the learner finds themselves.

Transformative learning (Mezirow, 1981, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1997) expands our understanding of constructing knowledge by defining learning as a critically reflective process where the learner ultimately reflects on assumptions that frame previous understandings and determines whether those assumptions are still valid in the learner's present situation. Adults learn within this framework by adding to old meaning schemes, acquiring new meaning schemes, transforming meaning schemes, or transforming perspectives. According to Mezirow (1997), "a significant personal transformation involving subjective reframing, that is, transforming one's own frame of reference, often occurs in response to a disorienting dilemma through a three-part process: critical reflection on one's own assumption, discourse to validate the critically reflective insight, and action" (p. 60).

The issues in the relationship of context to professional practice are particularly in today's environment because professionals are often considered employees of organizations rather than free, autonomous decision-makers (McGuire, 1993). Grzyb et al. (1997) point out that these changing conditions necessitate a deeper understanding of organizational professions, the impact of bureaucracy, and changing organizational dynamics on professional work. Cervero (1985) included the identification of the social system (context) as a variable with impact on the outcome of continuing education programs. "This may be the most powerful, yet overlooked, variable in analyzing the effectiveness of continuing professional education" (p. 87).

To provide a framework for examining the context of professional practice, Bolman and Deal's (1997, 1991) framework was selected. Bolman and Deal (1997) demonstrated that organizations can be viewed through four different lenses or frames, including the structural, human resources, political, and symbolic frame. The structural frame draws on concepts from sociology and emphasizes formal roles, defined relationships, and structures that fit the organizational environment and technology. Within the human resources frame it is believed that organizations have individuals with needs and feelings that must be taken into account so that individuals can learn, grow, and change. The political frame analyzes the organization as groups competing for power and resources. The tools of this frame are bargaining, negotiation, coercion, and compromise. Finally, the symbolic frame (similar to organizational culture) abandons rationality and sees organizations as tribes with cultures propelled by ceremonies, stories, heroes, and myths. Bolman and Deal (1991, 1997) believe that organizations can be understood, analyzed and changed by using different lens and/or frames as ways to approach organizational issues.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were advanced to guide this inquiry. 1. What makes knowledge meaningful in the context of professional practice? 2. How is the construction of knowledge affected by the different frames (structural, political, human relations, symbolic) of the context in which professionals practice?

**Methodology**

To analyze the above research questions, individuals from three different professions were interviewed 9-24 months following their attendance at a CPE program. A sample of 20 social workers, 20 lawyers, and 20 nurses was recruited. Professionals were interviewed about their learning from the continuing education activity attended, the context of their work environment and the nature of their professional practice. The 60 semi-structured interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Three data analysis strategies were employed in this study. First, a concept map of each interview was created to represent the major themes and concepts discussed. Second, a computerized category system was created for coding the transcribed data. Third, a system of matrices was developed to analyze what all participants said about the specific research questions posed. Dependability and confirmability of study results were assessed using a qualitative data analysis audit.

**Results**

*Knowledge and Professional Practice.* Study results indicate that professionals who attended CPE programs used this new information to continually construct and reconstruct their knowledge base. Professionals in this study did not see transfer of learning as an outcome, but rather transfer was viewed as an integral part of the knowledge construction process. The new information learned in CPE programs was added to a professional's knowledge base through a complex process of thinking about the new information, acting on the new information and identifying their feelings about the information. It was through this process that knowledge from CPE became meaningful.

Each profession described the process used to construct knowledge differently. Social workers framed their understanding and construction of knowledge from CPE programs through their advocacy role. Social workers described themselves as "stewards" of the information and explained how they actively sought ways that they could help their clients by using information that they learned in CPE.

> *I went to that session thinking about the future more and wanting to know what was going to be happening with the social work profession in the near future especially . . . with the W2. I guess it was a broader thing, a more political interest that I had, how could I use what I learned to help defend my clients needs in the system.*

Lawyers, on the other hand, tended to develop their own systems to construct knowledge. Lawyers saw CPE as providing a "road map" for their practice. During attendance at a CPE program, lawyers would often create their own individual ways to link new legal information to the cases on which they were currently working by developing note taking or filing systems. For example, one lawyer indicated:

> *I had represented a guy who had custody of his children but he owed support from 16 years ago. I tried to get the amount reduced because he had his kids, but he still owed it to the welfare department from his wife having the kids when they were one and two years old. And now the kids are 20 and 21,. . . I heard something in the seminar that made me think there is some ammunition here that I could use in a motion for the*

> *court to reconsider. So I jotted that down and made sure to include it in his file and used it when I filed the motion.*

Finally, nurses described how they linked client needs, with new information from CPE so that the entire knowledge base because integrated. This knowledge base functioned more like a web of information that nurses would draw on when presented with new clients. Consider the nurse who describes this process as follows.

> *I mean I can't really say what helps me dealt with what. I think of it more like creating mosaics. I mean, you have all these little pieces that come from all over and in and of themselves they don't mean much, but when you put them together you have a beautiful picture. Continuing education and client care are more like that for me. I take little pieces of what I learn from many places and put them together until I have my own picture.*

In summary, each profession indicated that knowledge became meaningful through a process they used to link the information with their practice. Because of their advocacy role social workers saw themselves as stewards of information, conversely, nurses saw themselves as creating mosaics, and lawyers described the CPE process as a road map for their practice.

As indicated above, constructivist learning theory can help us understand how professionals acquire knowledge, how they make use of their experiences and how they learn through their practice. But the results of this study indicated that, there is another level of learning that goes beyond what we can understand from constructivist frameworks. Professionals described how they learned topics in educational programs only to have their ideas on those topics changed in the context of practice. Often, it was an emotional encounter with a client that changed a professional's practice. In other words, these encounters were as important in transforming professionals' perspectives as was knowledge acquired in CPE courses.

For example, a nurse in this study described how she saw herself as a relatively good communicator. She had learned communication theory in her basic prepatory program, reviewed it in CPE programs and practiced the skill with her clients while doing assessments, interviews and treatments. When she worked with a client who was dying, however, this client taught her what it meant to communicate. Her understanding of communication shifted from saying the right thing, to being available on the client's terms. "My assumption," she stated, "was that if I said the right words, I was communicating well. After this experience I recognized that I was basing my actions on a view of communication that was not really accurate in my practice. I now believe that communication is about presence, caring and time, not just words." In this example, the professional learned by constructing an understanding of the concept of communication and by changing her perspective and assumptions about what communication meant following a significant practice experience.

In another example, a social worker described how her understanding of resistance in working with involuntary clients changed her views on the connections between social work and politics. She indicated that her basic education "labeled people as resistant." She explained the impact of her practice on this perspective: "When somebody comes to you with a problem, I learned that you don't have to spend as much time fixing that person as you do fixing the things around them in the environment. If you listen, you know it is not so much resistance; but it's racism, it's poverty. I learned to reconceptualize resistance and focus not so much on the individual in a therapeutic sense, but to focus on the system, and to be an advocate at the system level." This social worker indicated that she had constructed a new meaning of the concept of resistance through her practice and that she had transformed her perspective so that her interventions with clients were on a much broader level.

*Context.* The complex process of knowledge construction and transformation described in the previous section of this paper, occurred in a particular practice context as well. So not only did the content of the CPE program, and the professional practice shape the construction of knowledge but the context in which professionals worked added another level of complexity to the process. Each professional interviewed for this study was asked to explain how the structural, human resources, political and symbolic frames of the context of their work environment impacted knowledge development.

Structural frame. Each of the three professions, lawyers, nurses and social workers described the impact of the structural frame in a unique way. Lawyers, for the most part indicated that the structural frame had little impact on their use of knowledge. Lawyers indicated that because of the autonomous nature of their practice, if they learned new information that they wanted to use with a client they did so with very little concern about the structure of the firm. Nurses, on the other hand described the structure of their organizations as a "hurdle", and indicated that to use new information in their practice they often had to find creative ways to go around the organizational structure. Social workers seemed to feel that the use of new information that would benefit their client was an individual responsibility and they felt obligated not to let the structure of the organization get in the way.

Human resources frame. All three professions indicated that other people in the organization were for the most part encouraging and supportive to using new information in their practice. Nurses and social workers indicated that their "bosses and colleagues" were usually open to new ideas and willing to try new things, as long as "the ideas weren't too far out". Nurses and social workers expressed that they often talked with colleagues about new ideas or "just to run things by them" before trying something new. Lawyers, however, were often in individual and solo practices, as a result, the human resources issues affected them differently. Lawyers indicated that they often had to seek out other people so that they had a colleague to talk with about new ideas. Lawyers indicated that people they worked with did not get in the way of using new information, but rather the issue was not having enough easily accessible colleagues with whom to talk. Many lawyers in this study developed informal colleague networks of individuals with whom they could interact. Sometimes these were infrequent lunch or breakfast groups that met when an issue arose and other times they were structured groups that met on a routine basis. The interesting finding here was that these were groups created for the express purpose of sharing ideas in practice, but these groups were created outside of a CPE mechanism.

Political frame. In each of the professions interviewed, the political frame was used in a different manner. Lawyers ignored the political frame and incorporated whatever information they needed in their practice. Social workers were well aware of the political frame and used information from CPE programs in what they saw as their advocacy role. Social workers were very well aware of both the macro and micro political issues that impacted their work, and yet, would indicate that "just because a door is closed, it does not mean it is locked." Social workers expressed that their role as an advocate was political and as such, they felt it imperative that they not only understand the politics of the contexts in which they worked, but that they be able to work in the political realm to help meet their clients' needs. In contrast, nurses would literally screen out information from CPE programs if they believed the political context would prevent its use. For example, nurses indicated that they would not even share information from CPE programs if they felt they did not have the power, money or time to use the information.

Symbolic frame. For nurses and social workers it appeared that the political issues of their practice seemed to define the symbolic frame in many ways. The issues of gender, power, change, money and time all initially arose from the political frame but became imbedded in the organization as part of the symbolic frame. So for nurses and social workers there did not seem to be a real clear distinction between these frames. Lawyers described one element of the symbolic frame that did have an impact on their use of knowledge. Lawyers described how their work was set within an adversarial system and that their use of knowledge was often done as a mechanism to "defeat the other side" or to "win the case". Lawyers would describe that they felt good in their practice when they could "obtain an outcome for their client that the client wanted."

## Implications for the Practice of Adult Education

This study raises a number of questions and implications for adult education specifically, in the area of continuing professional education. First, it suggests a major research question in the field of continuing professional education: Is application of knowledge an outcome of continuing education or part of the knowledge construction process? This study supports Detterman's (1993) position that there is no general cognitive skill that promotes learning transfer, and thus the importance of contextualized learning is emphasized. Perhaps, this study should be replicated across additional disciplines to determine if other professions integrate new knowledge in a similar fashion to the three described here.

The role of a CPE provider, as indicated in this study, is much more than simply designing programs so professionals can adopt new information in their practice. The role of the CPE provider is facilitating a process of learning, reflection, growth and change. Study findings indicated that adult educators need to come to a new understanding of learning and context. No longer can education be seen as the provision of learning materials and educational programs to the individual. In today's complex, fast changing, technology enhanced environments it is incumbent on adult educators to view the learning as situated in a unique context and to consider how this context enhances, detracts or shapes the learning of the individual. In other words, "the unheralded importance of activity and enculturation to learning suggests that much common educational practice is the victim of an inadequate epistemology. A new epistemology might hold the key to a dramatic improvement in learning and a completely new perspective on education" (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989, p. 41). As professionals continue to be integrated into organizations the linkages between context and practice need to understood, defined and analyzed so that learning and professional practice can continue to grow in these new contexts.

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Provided upon request

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# Context in the ContextualizedCurriculum: Adult Life Worlds as Unitary or Multiplistic?

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## Abstract

*Contextual learning represents a process in which adults learn new knowledge in ways that makes sense to them within their life contexts. Educational approaches based on this process seek to foster more meaningful experiences for participating learners. Technical-rational interpretations of the concept, however, have lead to instrumental, unidimensional applications and representational, rather, than constructive approaches to meaning in adult learning. These approaches fail to adequately address the multiplistic, and sometimes contradictory ways in which the problem of meaning expresses itself in learners' lives. To address this problem, we argue for more practical and emancipatory interpretations of contextual learning.*

TJ, a young, white male in his late 20s, is a second semester student in developmental education at a large, Midwestern community college. Sitting across from the interviewer, TJ's physical stature seems small, somewhat befitting his quiet and shy demeanor. When asked about his decision to go to school, TJ has some trouble explaining what led him to enroll. "I don't really know for sure what I'm going to college for actually," he responds. "It's just knowing that I'm going." Referring to the work he had been doing for many years TJ explains, "Things just were pretty stagnant." As if to stress the point to himself, he repeats, "Working there for so many years, it gets kinda stagnant." Later he indicates that he came to "find out more about me and what my interests are." Asked if courses he was taking were helping him do that, he replies, "Not really. Although the classes are interesting and stuff...I'm not really into Math or English."

TJ represents one of thousands of underprepared adults enrolled in adult literacy, basic education, GED preparation or developmental education programs. He could almost be a kind of prototype of the underprepared adult. Not interested and not liking high school, TJ left after his sophomore year, completing his diploma in a special two-year program nine years later. Now, approaching 30, he looks to community college and the courses it offers to help him determine what his interests are, what to do with his life. The experience of TJ and thousands like him underscores the problem of meaning for underprepared adults and those who teach them. Indeed, many adult learners are struggling to find meaning in their lives (Carlsen, 1988; Daloz, 1986). Like TJ, they frequently turn to formal education for help in this often painful, existential search.

Among underprepared adults, however, attrition rates in formal educational programs are alarmingly high and levels of academic success disturbingly low (Beder, 1991; Grubb, 1996). To address what many perceive to be a lack of curricular coherence and meaning in these programs (Grubb, 1996), educators have called for more conceptualized learning approaches. In theory, these approaches attempt to foster connections for underprepared adults between academic content and meaningful contexts. In practice, however, contextual learning is used to enhance delivery of pre-packaged content to learners perceived to be reluctant and often resistant. In these programs academic subjects, such as reading, writing, and math, are taught within contexts thought to be more meaningful to adult learners. Examples of this practice include programs in workplace literacy (ERIC, 1998), some family literacy (Richards, 1998), welfare-to-work (Martin & Fisher, 1998), and integration of academic and vocational subjects (Grubb, 1996).

In this paper, we argue that much of the practice of contextual learning for underprepared adults reflects technical rational interpretations of knowledge and a tendency to reduce the concept to narrow, unidimensional notions of use and application within contexts selected by teachers or policymakers. Such interpretations do not adequately address the complexity of the life-worlds which guide the thoughts and social actions of underprepared adult learners. Our purpose here is to offer a point of resistance to dominant interpretations of contextual learning and to suggest the need for a critical review of the concept. We develop this argument using a theoretical understanding of contextualism and the experiences of underprepared adults in developmental education.

## Constructivist Foundations of Contextual Learning

Theoretically, the concept of contextual learning reflects an attempt to recognize and address, regardless of the content or focus, the problem of meaning inherent in all learning (Jarvis, 1992; Mezirow, 1991). Authentic learning reflects an experience of the novel or the unknown, in which the subject perceives a lack of coherent meaning (Mahoney, 1991) within the present experience and an attempt to make sense of these novel experiences at some level. Most definitions stress a critical role of meaning-making in the process of learning. According to Hull and Souders (1996, pp. 15-16), "[L]earning is enhanced when students process new information or knowledge in such a way that it makes sense to them in their frame of reference (their own inner world of memory, experience and response)." Contextualism challenges us to see that meanings are not universal or independent of either the situation or the knower. Rather, meaning is understood to reside "in" such things as words and sentences, and these stimuli are "embedded in contexts or backgrounds that color their interpretation" (Mahoney, 1991, p. 89). What is learned depends on these various contexts and the transactions that occur between the learner and these contexts. Contextualism assumes a context which is meaningful to the learner. This idea is important to understanding how learning can be interpreted as a form of meaning-making.

The theoretical foundations of contextual learning reflect strong and unambiguous alignment with a constructivist epistemology. According to this view, the meaning of what underprepared adults are learning is intimately bound up with their life experiences and contexts. The meaning of what is learned comes to be constructed by participating learners rather than represented as intended by the teacher (Mahoney, 1991). Constructivism challenges traditional notions of technical-rational knowledge that have guided the work of educators for many years. This framework tends to radically redefine the relationship of and blur the lines between the knower and what is known (Steffe & Gale, 1995). Constructivism challenges us to reconsider traditional answers to the questions of what is most worth knowing and who decides.

## Contextual Learning and Theories of Meaning

Beliefs about the role of contexts in learning ranging across a spectrum of theories of meaning (Mahoney, 1991). At one end, we find association and representation theories, exemplified in traditional, skills-based and subject-based contexts. They are characterized by the teacher's delivery of academic skills, ideas, and concepts that are outside of the learners' life experiences. The goal is to reproduce within the learner representations of meaning as they are embodied in the text being taught. At the other end we find contextual theories of meaning, characterized by learner-based contexts and an integration of academic content with learners' life experiences. The goal here is to foster meaning and sense making around academic topics being studied. Along this spectrum we might locate various ways in which contexts are used to help learners with either of these goals.

Teachers' uses of examples to help illustrate what is meant by certain concepts or ideas represents a point on this continuum closer to the representational view of meaning. For example, when asked what he liked about his developmental education classes, one student responded, "They [the teachers] have examples of certain types of things. It makes it more interesting." Another student told us, "He [the teacher] tries to relate the outside world into his class, so we will better understand." Using examples from their own lives and the outside world that students can relate to is one way teachers help their learners make connections with otherwise abstract and meaningless content. The emphasis, however, remains not on learners constructing their own meaning but on developing accurate representations of the meaning intended through the text.

Prevailing views of contextual learning, as they are manifest in workplace learning, welfare-to-work, academic-vocational integration, and certain forms of family literacy reflect a similar theory of meaning. The practice of contextual learning characteristic of these programs reflects "learning in the context of how the knowledge/information can be used" (Hull & Sounders, 1996, p. 16). It is thought that learners will make better sense of what is learned if they understand and grasp how it can be used in a real-world context. For the most part, the *contexts* implied in this sense refer to occupational settings. By the notion of *experience*, educators usually intend particular tasks that individuals are expected to perform within these contexts. For example, the SCANS report (1991) operationalizes the occupational context as a set of specific competencies which employers expect of their workers. These competencies provide an impressive list of academic, thinking, learning, personal, and interpersonal qualities required of workers today. The tasks or learning problems reflected in these competencies are regarded as unproblematic, universal challenges to being a productive citizen and worker.

At first glance, these efforts to contextualize academic content and skills seem a definite improvement over abstract and decontextualized approaches to content. Fractions make sense when they are taught in the context of using a socket set within one's work as a mechanic. Composition takes on new meaning when it is taught in the context of writing a cover letter for a job application. Decoding and encoding of written text are enhanced when the course uses shop manuals as its formal texts. The idea of using contexts to exemplify or illustrate the application of academic concepts, however, tends to reinforce the role of the educator as the person who selects and designs particular contexts being used in the curriculum. Other than an abstract possibility that some future context for the learner might be similar to these preselected contexts, they often bear little direct relation to the learners' actual life contexts.

Despite the lack of direct connection to their own life experiences, learners none-the-less implicitly reveal a constructivist understanding of their instructional context. For example, this process of meaning-making is evident in the earlier remarks about TJ's experience of developmental education that he perceives English and Math as largely irrelevant to his own interests. But he understands the particular context as one that is necessary for him to "get through," in order to study what he really wants to study. Thus, one of the meanings he is deriving from his experience of these subjects is that they are hoops that need to be jumped through, the price of admission to the real event. Many of the learners interviewed reflected similar understandings of their experiences in the academic subjects that make up developmental education. They often didn't know for sure why they were being required to take these courses but generally regarded them as a necessary step in their journey. Learners are making sense of these contexts but the content itself remains apart from this meaning-making process..

From a constructivist perspective, contextual learning suggests that the learner's life contexts play a significant role in the process of learning and meaning-making. The underprepared adult learners we interviewed talked at length about family and work-related issues. For example, Suzanne, in relation to her decision to return to school, talked about the two-year search for her son as the experience that propelled her to enroll. Most of adult learners identified getting a better job as a major reason why they had decided to pursue postsecondary education. But they did not define these contexts in terms of efficacious performance, as is common in many workplace literacy programs. Rather, their descriptions reveal life contexts that are defined more in socio-cultural terms. Meaningful work - a "good job" - and relationships with others were major themes in the ways they talked about these contexts. Weaving their way throughout these conversations, however, were uncertainties about why they were back in school and what they were hoping to achieve. Like TJ, many seemed to be using the experience to help them better understand their interests and abilities. Implicit within these discussions of goals for being in school were questions of self-identity. Some students seemed to be struggling to reconcile who they saw themselves now, as a college student, with a painful sense of self defined through difficult years in high school. One theme that clearly emerged was their sense of self as a student, and how their prior experiences tended to frame how they approached to current roles. These themes represent life contexts in and through which adult learners will make sense of what it is they are being asked to learn (Dirkx & Prenger, 1997).

In contextual learning approaches, then, whose context characterizes the learning experience matters a great deal. In many instances, selection of the particular context is not driven primarily by student interests or even necessarily by the teacher. Rather, these contexts are often determined by appeal to abstract ideas or issues largely external to learners, such as the need for a skilled, productive, workforce, reform of welfare, and reducing inter-generational illiteracy through family literacy programs. The workplace or the family become "contexts" for learning not because they are necessarily meaningful to the learner but because they are judged by others to be important locations for learners to demonstrate certain levels of competence or skill. Rather than developing a deeper understanding of these contexts, these approaches foster a form of meaning-making that, at best, allows learners to cope with a marginally meaningful situation. In less favorable situations, learners may experience a lack of coherence and meaningfulness in the curriculum, which may lead further to alienation, estrangement, and disconnection.

## Discussion and Conclusion

We have argued that approaches to contextual learning with underprepared adults, manifest in such practices as workplace and some family literacy, welfare-to-work, and academic-vocational curriculum integration, are largely oriented to the application and use of knowledge and skill (Bolt & Swartz, 1997) in specific, pre-determined contexts. They are guided by representational rather than constructivist theories of meaning, rely on a technical rationality, and frame knowledge in largely instrumental terms. These approaches to contextual learning minimize or largely ignore broader life contexts that underprepared adults bring to their learning settings. Although they may increase learner interest in and motivation to learn the prescribed content, these strategies fail to address the broader issues raised by the life contexts in which these learners find themselves. In a sense, an approach intended to be educative inadvertently becomes miseducative. They diminish rather than enhance meaning-making within learners' lives. Rather than providing an instructional environment in which learners are invited to name and explore problematic aspects of their experience, they are provided "meaning" in pre-packaged forms (e.g., lists of competencies) and asked to internalize these meanings through application in highly instrumental situations. From this perspective, meaning resides outside the person and is taken in by the learner as representations of this outer world. Such an approach is oriented to the instrumental application of knowledge to *future,* work or family-related experiences. It neglects learners' life experiences, prior knowledge which they bring to the learning setting, and the rich opportunities available through learning as exploring, discovering, and constructing one's own meaning and knowledge.

When contexts and meaning are defined by forces external to the learners' life-worlds, they deprive learners of a sense of agency and active construction of their own meaning. If we view learning and meaning-making only from this particular perspective, we run the risk of an epistemological imbalance in our life-world (Pusey, 1987). We tend to see human affairs, even those requiring deliberative inquiry, or those justifying particular goals, values, and needs, as matters that can be settled through application of scientific or technical means. Or, more likely, we increasingly fail to see these matters as choices at all, because we defer our authority to economic and political spheres within society that implicitly shape our actions. A blatant example of this domination of system forces in our daily lives is the influence of the "global economy" on our thinking about the kinds of education and training needed by society. Such intrusions result in what Welton (1995) descriptively refers to it as dessication of the life-world.

Beyond an interest in or need for improved career and occupational choices, the continuing education of underprepared adult learners takes place within complex and multi-faceted life-worlds. To the extent that technical rationality is overemphasized, and practical and emancipatory rationalities are ignored, adult learners will increasingly experience their culture and life-worlds as alienating, fragmented, and lacking in meaning (Pusey, 1987). A major goal of adult learning, then, is the rationalization of the life-world (Mezirow, 1991; Welton, 1995). By this, we mean the expansion of the horizons of the life-world through dialogue, reason, reflection, and deliberation. Through this process, we gradually become more aware of the taken-for-granted assumptions and understandings we implicitly use to guide our actions. To be truly educative, contextual learning must take as its context the multiplistic nature of adult life-worlds. Its aim should be to foster a fuller and more consciously balanced understanding of the dynamics and processes that make up the life-world.

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# An Examination of the Relevance of Doctoral Study to University Continuing Education Practitioners in the U. S. A.*

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## Abstract

A sample of United States university continuing educators was surveyed to determine motivations for and the benefits of doctoral study. Motivations and benefits were found to be *Professional Development*, *Job Security and Advancement*, and *Credibility and Competence*. Motivations and benefits were found to have different rank orders, suggesting differences in subjects' expectations for and outcomes derived from doctoral study. Few significant differences in motivations and benefits were found, suggesting relative homogeneity within the profession across institutional type, continuing education role, gender, and years of experience. However, subjects' level of education and role were found to be related to their beliefs about the educational level required for their jobs.

## Introduction and Purpose

A high priority for continuing higher education has been to define its practice (Donaldson & Kuhne, 1994; Pearce, Hein, & Donaldson, 1998). An issue associated with this needed definition is the value of different types of preparation and continued professional development for university continuing educators. Little research has been conducted which directly seeks to determine practitioners' beliefs and perceptions about academic preparation and professional development for the university continuing education role, or about the benefits gained from these learning experiences. Therefore a gap exists in our understanding of the value university continuing educators place on certain types of professional preparation and development, especially the doctoral degree, in satisfying requirements for competent performance and professional advancement. This study begins to address this gap by examining continuing educators' perceptions of the value and benefits of doctoral study.

The major purpose of this research was to examine university continuing educators' motivations for and perceived benefits derived from doctoral study. Secondary purposes were to compare findings on the basis of (a) professional continuing education role and demographic data, and (b) type of higher education institution in which continuing educators work. To achieve these purposes the following research questions were addressed:

1. What motivational factors influence continuing educators to pursue a doctoral degree and what benefits do they realize from completing the degree?
2. Are there differences in motivation for and perceived benefits from doctoral study on the basis of (a) continuing education role, (b) age, (c) gender, (d) years of experience, (e) type of employing institution (research, doctoral, master's and baccalaureate), and (f) beliefs about degree focus (adult/continuing education (A/CE) or other)?
3. What mix of education and experience do continuing educators believe is necessary for their current role and do these judgments differ on the basis of role, type of employing institution, and degree held?

## Related Literature

The question of professional preparation and development of university continuing educators has remained a point of debate in the field among both academics and practitioners (Griffith, 1980; Cunningham & Veri, 1981; Zeph, 1991). Pittman (1995), for example, has observed that there is no consensus that an advanced degree in adult education should be a requirement for performing the job in continuing education. Professors of adult education even argue the value of an advanced degree. In addition, Pittman noted that . . . the people who staff those [university continuing education] divisions seem largely unconvinced. In an NUCEA (1989) survey of continuing higher education CEO's, fewer than half ranked an advanced degree in adult education as >very important in preparing for a career in their field (p.346). Pittman argued that these results provide evidence of lack of credibility among high-ranking practitioners for preparation in A/CE. Pittman said one of the problems was a lack of definition for continuing education. Continuing educators are a highly diverse group, with varying academic backgrounds and experience. Most people enter the profession . . . perhaps not really by accident but also seldom by design (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 24). As a result, those who work in continuing education divisions often do not identify themselves with the continuing education profession.

Most discussion of professional preparation and development for university continuing education practice has been rhetorical. However, one exception to the limited research on the motivations for and benefits of graduate study for continuing educators is Hamil and Young's (1994) study of graduates of Northern Illinois University's adult education program. Respondents in the Hamil and Young study reported job advancement as a primary reason for pursuing the degree. Seventy percent of respondents reported advancement in their job position after having obtained their highest graduate degree, and three other outcomes -- (a) increased status and responsibilities within their institutions, (b) increased confidence and competency, and (c) a firm theoretical and philosophical foundation in adult education, which increased their confidence in job performance.

Zeph (1991) similarly reported the completion of a graduate degree as offering the opportunity Afor both building competencies and building the vita (p. 82). She suggested professional development was accomplished in graduate study by increasing confidence and credibility. From her perspective, students pursue graduate degrees to better understand their work, to advance in their current institution, or in rare cases, to begin a new career.

## Method

Survey research was employed to gather data from United States university continuing educators. The survey questionnaire was distributed to university continuing educators in a sample of all four-year member institutions of the University Continuing Education Association and the Association for Continuing Higher Education. Multistage cluster sampling with stratification (with probability proportionate to size sampling) guided selection of institutions identified for receipt of the questionnaire (Babbie, 1973). Strata were the eight Carnegie classifications of four-year higher education institutions (Carnegie Foundation's Classification, 1994). The sample consisted of 603 individuals at 140 institutions. Questionnaires were mailed in bulk to participating institutions for distribution to university continuing educators by their deans/directors. A business reply envelope was provided so participants could return their questionnaires directly to the researchers. Responses were received from 396 individuals (65.7% response rate) representing 79 institutions (56.4% response rate).

The survey questionnaire included 43 items in five different sections allowing differential responses from respondents who possessed or were working on doctoral degrees and those who were not. Where possible, we employed a 10-point scale in which A10" reflected the highest rating possible (e.g., most influential motivational factor) and A1" reflected the lowest rating possible (e.g., no benefit at all from doctoral study) (Bolanowski & Gescheider, 1991). For this paper, we employed responses to those questions focusing on demographic data, continuing education role, institutional type, motivations for and benefits of doctoral study, and respondents' judgments about the mix of education and experience required for their current positions. Two questions (one on motivations and one on benefits) contained 18 and 21 items respectively. These were subjected to principal components factor analysis (using promax rotation) for purposes of data reduction (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). We answered the first research question through this factor analysis, descriptive statistics and Analysis of Variance to explore within subjects differences. We addressed question two through Multiple Analysis of Variance, with post-hoc tests as appropriate (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). We used the Chi Square test of independence for the third research question.

## Findings

Of the 396 respondents, 57% were female and 43% were male. Ten (2.5%) respondents were 20-29 years of age. 72 (18.3%) were 30-39, 150 (37.9%) were 40-49, 143 (36.2%) were 50-59, and 20 (5.1%) were 60 or older. One hundred nineteen (30.3%) respondents had five or fewer years of experience in continuing education, 95 (24.2%) had six to ten years, and 178 ( 45.4%) had 11 or more years. One hundred forty-six (37.6%) were either deans or associate/assistant deans, 72 (18.5%) were program directors, and the remaining 171 (43.9%) were program coordinators or assistants, marketing coordinators, or held other positions that supported program development and delivery. Master's degrees were held by 339 (85.8%) respondents. One hundred sixty-six (41.9%) respondents worked in research institutions, 67 (16.9%) worked in doctoral institutions, 116 (29.3%) worked in master's institutions, and 47 (11.9%) worked in baccalaureate institutions. One hundred eighty-six (48.1%) respondents had either completed or begun doctoral study at the time of the survey. Responses from this doctoral subset of respondents were employed to answer the first two research questions. Responses from all respondents were used to answer the third one.

Of 186 respondents (47% of all respondents) who either had the doctorate or were pursuing the degree, 85 (46%) were women and 100 (54%) were men. In this doctoral group, one (0.5%) was 20-29 years of age, 14 (7.5%) were 30-39, 72 (38.7%) were 40-49, 84 (45.2%) were 50-59, and 15 (8.1%) were 60 or older. Thirty-eight (20.7%) had five or fewer years of experience in continuing education, 35 (19%) had six to ten years, and 111 (60.3%) had 11 or more years of experience. One hundred one (55.8%) were deans or associate/assistant deans, 30 (16.7%) were program directors, and 50 (27.6%) held lower level positions. Eighty-six (46.2%) of doctoral respondents worked in research institutions, 30 (16.1%) worked in doctoral institutions, 47 (25.7%) worked in master's institutions, and 23 (12.4%) worked in baccalaureate institutions. More than half (54%) of these respondents indicated they had no university continuing education experience prior to pursuing the doctorate. Approximately one-third (35%) of those who enrolled in a doctoral program (any field) had actually completed the doctorate at the time of the survey, and of these respondents, 16% obtained the degree in A/CE while 84% earned it in other fields.

Of 232 respondents who believed the doctorate should be a requirement to work in university continuing education, only 17 (7.3%) said that the degree should be in A/CE. One hundred sixty-seven (72%) said it should not necessarily be in adult education, and another 48 (20.7%) noted that it should not be in A/CE. When asked to explain their answer, 127 (59%) of those indicating that the doctorate should either not or not necessarily be in A/CE responded that a doctorate in adult education was not relevant or useful, and that the skills gained through study in other fields were more applicable to their job responsibilities.

Influences and Benefits. Factor analysis of the question dealing with motivations for pursuing doctoral study resulted in the identification of three factors (reported in rank order by adjusted mean). The first factor, *Job Security and Advancement* (6.31 on a 10-point scale) had five items (e.g., To enhance my job security and To get promotion and tenure) and a reliability of .81 (Cronbach's Alpha). The second, *Professional Development and Learning* (mean = 5.88) contained six items (e.g., To increase my competence in research and To achieve the personal goal of obtaining the doctorate) with a reliability of .808. The final factor *Developing Credibility as a Continuing Educator* (mean = 4.26) contained six items (e.g., To increase my credibility and influence in my continuing education unit, To increase my credibility and influence among peers in the field of continuing education) and had a reliability of .858. Within subjects tests of significance demonstrated that the mean of the first factor was significantly higher than the means of the second and third factors which did not differ significantly from one another.

Factor analysis of the question dealing with benefits from doctoral study also resulted in a three factor solution. The first factor, *Professional Development and Learning* (mean = 7.43), contained eight items (e.g., Learned more about research, Learned more about theory) and had a reliability of .889. The second factor, *Continuing Education Competence and Credibility* (mean = 6.51), had seven items (e.g., Became a better adult/continuing educator, Increased my credibility and influence in my CE unit, among peers, and in my university) with a reliability of .861. The third factor, *Job Security and Advancement* (mean = 5.69), had five items (e.g., Enhanced job security, Improved opportunity for other jobs), with a reliability of .772. Within subjects tests of significance demonstrated that *Professional Development and Learning* was significantly higher than the other two factors which did not differ significantly from one another.

Differences in Motivations and Benefits. No significant differences in respondents' motivations or perceptions of benefits were found based upon their gender, continuing education role, and years of experience. One significant difference was found for the motivational factor, *Job Security and Advancement*. Subjects who were 30-39 years old had significantly higher mean scores than other age groups (p = .016). Another significant difference was found for the benefit, *Job Security and Advancement*. Respondents working at research and master's institutions had higher mean scores on this benefit than those working in doctoral institutions (p = .047).

Mix of Education and Experience. Subjects were asked to indicate the minimal, preferred, and most realistic combinations of education (bachelor's, master's, doctoral degrees) and experience (0-4, 5-9, and 10 or more years) that would be required of persons who would replace them in their current jobs. The most frequently mentioned minimal qualifications were 0-4 years of experience with a master's degree. The most frequently mentioned preferred and most realistic qualifications were 5-9 years of experience with a master's degree. Chi Square analysis demonstrated that a higher than expected proportion of subjects with master's and doctoral degrees recommended master's or doctoral degrees as minimal, preferred, and most realistic educational qualifications for their replacements. Recommended educational level also was found to be related to respondents' continuing education role. A higher than expected proportion of those higher in the hierarchy (deans, associate/assistant deans, and program directors) recommended higher education levels than those occupying lower positions. The educational level recommended was found to be unrelated to the type of institution at which respondents worked.

## Conclusions

Despite differences in institutional type, role, gender, and years of experience, continuing educators who have the doctorate or are pursuing the degree are relatively homogeneous with respect to their motivations for pursuing the degree and their perceptions of the benefits they derived from it. This homogeneity is somewhat surprising, given variation in academic and administrative cultures among different types of higher education institutions (Clark, 1987) and different degree expectations for different continuing education roles. In addition, although continuing educators appear to pursue the doctorate primarily for economic reasons (i.e. job security and advancement), the primary benefit they derive from the experience is professional development, suggesting that for them the outcomes they realize differ in important ways from the reasons they pursued the degree in the first place. Findings about increased credibility among peers as a motivation and benefit suggest that the doctorate serves symbolic and status purposes, as well as substantive ones, highlighting the importance of the degree as a strategy for dealing with issues of marginality (Pearce, Hein, & Donaldson, 1998).

Over half of all respondents indicated that the doctorate should be a requirement to work in university continuing education. Yet the most preferred and realistic educational qualification reported by respondents for persons replacing them in their job was a master's degree. These conflicting results suggest internal conflict within the profession about ideal educational qualifications for practice, as well as perhaps a recognition of the marginal status of their work and the manifestation of this marginality in the lower level of education their institutions would expect for their replacements (Pearce, Hein, & Donaldson, 1998). Results of this study are congruent with other research reporting the low value placed on the doctorate in adult and continuing education by deans of university continuing education (Pittman, 1995). But, findings of the present study also suggest that this opinion is not only shared by deans alone but permeates the ranks of university continuing educators.

The demographic profile of respondents with doctorates differed from the profile of all subjects, suggesting that doctoral study plays a different role in the careers of women and of those who aspire to higher levels in the continuing education leadership hierarchy. Role and educational level also were related to beliefs about the educational level that should and would be required of persons replacing subjects in their current positions. The composite of gender, educational level, and role variables, tempered with the realities of marginality and the status function played by the doctorate, suggest some subtleties in the career patterns of continuing educators worthy of further exploration.

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[*] This research was supported in part by a grant from the Association for Continuing Higher Education.

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# Learning Styles: Problem or Promise?

Susan Hayes Droegemueller

**"The more reading a teacher does on learning styles, the less pragmaticallyapplicable the information becomes."** (Torrance and Rockenstein, p.278, in Schmeck.)

## Abstract and Introduction

Learning Styles has been a prevalent theme in educational practice for over twenty years. The field is popularly known for its insightful worksheets and general appeal as a non-threatening way to look at individual differences. But for the practitioner attempting to understand and use the information, the field is a maze of contradictory and inconsistent theory, research, instrumentation, and recommendations for appropriate usage. Users of any given instrument are often unaware that they may be seeing just one piece of a much larger and hidden picture. Although this confusion and fragmentation has been a concern of several writers over the past 20 years, there has been little progress in reaching consensus helpful to the educator. This paper summarizes some of the persistent problems in application, especially those created by various researcher perspectives: language, selection of learning traits, and differences in instrumentation. An attempt to help illustrate the "big picture" is presented through the conceptual organizing frameworks of 9 different authors. While these frameworks are also somewhat contradictory, they provide one of the best tools for practitioners who wish to understand and select from the vast array of Learning Style materials. In addition, a listing of 53 instruments used in assessing the various characteristics is provided. The promise of Learning Styles is their potential to inform HRD and general adult learning practices if limitations and complexities are understood and respected by the educator.

## History and Theory Base

Before considering some of the problems, it is helpful to understand the roots of contemporary Learning Style (LS) research. Its historyand varied theory base explain much of the confusion. Cognitive Learning (information processing) was the main research focus in the post-WW 11 era and maintains its prominence as the most studied and published part of the LS field. Early cognitive work focused on field dependence and related concepts, such as leveling/ sharpening and reflectivity/impulsivity. Other cognitive work looked at personality,with the perspective of Carl Jung used in much LS instrumentation. More current cognitive work has focused on left-right-whole brain functioning and creativity. The popular concept of "multiple intelligences" is often considered a reworkingof existing cognitive style theory. In addition to cognitive brain functioning, the LS field is influenced by general educational, social, and psychological theory (including experiential learning and motivation), instructional theory, and biological functioning research. Researchers and instrument developers typically focus on one of these fields in considering style. The specific term "Learning Style" became popularizedn the 1970's and 80's for practical application of the research in an educational setting.

## The Problem

The main hurdle is attempting to understand what is meant by Learning Styles. In reviewing literature, the reader quickly discovers numerousissues which create this confusion.

1.) **NO SINGLE DEFINITION OF STYLE**. A typical definition of LS is "the individual's characteristic ways of processing information, feeling, and behaving in learning situations." (Smith, p. 24, 1982) But each writer brings a new definition, generally reflective of his/her research or school of thought. "The relative lack of focus can be seen in the absence of a clear definition of LS and the contradictory research results, perhaps because learning style has been addressed by researchers in various disciplines who were asking different questions and focusing on different aspects of the learning process." (Hendricson,Berlocher, & Herbert in Claxton & Murrel, p. 5, 1987) Different definitions are not simply semantic, but real differences in the authors' underlying belief systems. For example, Gregorc's definition, " distinctive behaviors which serve as indicators of how a person learns from and adapts to his environment," (Martin, p.38, in National Association. . . 1982) implies that style has roots in both nature/nurture. (Keefe, p.44, in National Association . . .) This belief translates into Gregorc's inventory, which draws heavily on experiential learning theory. Another example is Messick's definition (1984, p. 61) of LS as "characteristic self-consistencies in information processing that develop in congenial ways around underlying personality." This definition is based on cognitive theory, tied to core personality, and suggests stability. A researcher with a contrasting viewis Sternberg. In describing his mental models theory he states that "styles are propensities, not abilities . . . fixed but fluid . . . they can be developed." (Sternberg, p. 366, 370, 1990) A related topic in the literature is the attempt to distinguish between LS and Cognitive Style, Strategy and Preferences. Again there is no consistency. Some authors use all the terms interchangeably because they believe they are the same things. Others believe the terms/concepts are not interchangeable. Some writers appear unaware of the debate or so biased in perspective that they arbitrarily interchange terms without being aware of the implications. **Lesson: Different definitions and instruments reflect the researcher's theory. Don't assume any given instrument reflects your philosophy about learning or intended use in practice.**

2.) **NO AGREED UPON SET OF LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS OR TRAITS.** Theorists have wildly differing perspectives about which and how many traits comprise LS. "Recognized Learning Styles cover a wide range of variables from cognitive processes to social preferences, from subject matter to gender differences . . . there is still little order, considerable redundancy, and little guidance for the educator." (Shore, p. 152in National Association . . . 1982) These differences will be reflected in the instrumentation. Some instruments use bi-polar scales which have an opposing, mutually-exclusive trait at each end of the scale. Often only one scale, e.g. field dependence/ independence is used. Such instruments measure an important but very limited set of traits and are typically used for cognitive characteristics. Another type of instrument measures the presence/strength of several diverse traits. These can be quite extensive. For example, 21 traits are measured by the PEPS Inventory. Traits or characteristics measured by various instruments are noted in the Instrument/Test

Listing. **Lesson: Match your instrument to the characteristics you wish to measure. Don't measure traits which you are unable or unwilling to apply in practice.**

3.) NO COMMON TERMINOLOGY FOR THE SAME OR SIMILAR CONCEPTS. Even when authors agree, they may use different terms for the same/similar trait. This is best illustrated in Kirby/Schmeck's framework. (Figure 4) For example, the term "global" may be used by one author while another uses the word "holistic." **Lesson: Different instruments may measure the same traits but use different names.**

4.) NO AGREED UPON REALM FROM WHICH TO DRAW TRAITS. Traits and characteristics may be drawn from justone area or many, including cognitive processing, environmental impact, motivation, biological response, self-image, social interaction, and instructional techniques. No instrument measures all realms. For example, an educator wishing to determine student preferences for working in groups or alone (social interaction needs) might wish to use the Grasha-Reichmann Inventory; the Riding Cognitive Assessment (measuring processing style) will not be helpful. **Lesson: Understanding this issue is critical forcorrect selection of instrumentation. Match instrument to the area you wish to measure.**

5.) NO COMMON ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK OF THEORIES AND INVENTORIES. The best way to see the whole picture of LS is to take all the various theories and instruments and categorize them. Several authors have attempted this. But these attempts mirror the same inconsistencies which plague the LS field in general; each framework categorizes the various Learning Styles differently. As Riding and Cheema lament in Morgan (p.141, 1997): "Cognitive style construct has been elusive; this is partly due to the fact many researchers fail to mention the existence of other types of styles. As a result, like the blind man and the elephant, different theorists have been working with different concepts . . . attempts to unite these scattered schools of thought have been extremely rare." Nonetheless, they give the practitioner some map by which to navigate the field. Therefore, nine of these frameworks are illustrated in Figures 1-9.

Curry's model (Fig.1) gives a simple, beginning model. It divides instruments into one of three realms: Personality, Information (cognitive) Processing, and Instructional Preferences. Similar ways of organizing are Claxton and Murrel (Fig. 2), Sadler-Smith (Fig. 3), Blakemore (Fig. 5), Rayner & Riding (Fig 7), and Keefe (Fig. 8). Two other models reduce LS to only cognitive measures: Schmeck, etc. (Fig. 4) and Riding & Cheema (Fig. 9). In contrast, Bonham excludes Cognitive Style from LS (Fig. 6) although the results are similar to Blakemore. **Lesson: Despite the academic contradictions in the various frameworks, they are helpful in understanding and selecting single or complimentary instruments.**

6.) THEORIES DO NOT ALWAYS RESULT IN AN INSTRUMENT. For example, McCarthy and Schmeck (Schmeck, 1988) present an interesting summary of the role of Self in learning, including self-reference, self-concept, self-esteem, and self-talk. But a specific LS inventory measuring these traits was not (apparently) developed. My impression, perhaps wrong, is that many LS researchers developed no readily available related instrumentation or tests. **Lesson: You may not be able to assesstraits which appear in literature.**

7.) **DIFFICULTY IN LOCATING LITERATURE AND INVENTORIES**. Most research is historically found under "Cognitive Style or Learning" and may be limited to theories/inventories dealing with that bias. Recent research focuses on right-left-whole brain issues, multiple intelligences, creativity, and instructional preferences ; style research may appear under those key words. "Learning Style" is less common language in academic literature and it may be out of favor as a term/concept in popular literature. Also, many different instruments have the same name, LSI (Learning Style Inventory), making it difficult to source or communicate correctly about different instruments. Some inventories referenced in scholarly literature are not easily sourced and may be out of print. **Lesson: Always cross-reference instruments or theories by author name and the traits measured.**

### Other Problems

Besides the confusion over definition, the field is beset by other concerns. These deserve mentioning, although most are addressed extensively in LS literature. Bonham best summarizes the problems in usage for adults when she writes, "The general view of LS is one of thinly developed theory and weak instruments supported by fragmented research, often in settings not typical of adult ed." (1988, p. 14)

**Instrumentation**. Instrumentation comes under the most frequent and negative scrutiny. For example, of the instruments Blakemore,McCary, and Coker (1985) studied, they found none with adequate evidence of reliability and validity. In my impression of studies, those conducted by instrument authors showed generally positive correlation or results to the variable studied, as opposed to the mixed results of less (potentially) biased studies. However,many positive studies are limited to predicting grade point average or other academic measures. Such studies are of limited application to a typical HRD or other adult learning setting where grades are not given. More useful adult measures, such as job performance or other application of learning, are not necessarily correlated to academic performance, so extrapolation of LS research is tenuous. Inventory design is often scrutinized because some (ipsative) scales have no absolute values, so formal measurement is difficult. Also, when such scales are created against norms, accurate face validity is a problem because persons who test "equal" orbi-polar scales are forced into a particular quadrant or definition. Normative groups used to validate most instruments are also middle-class, Western, white youth. Results may not be applicable to adults and differing racial, economic, or geographic groups. The frequent use ofbi-polar traits may not reflect complex human thought and behavior. (Bonham, 1998; Messick, 1984; and others.) I think is especially true regarding models which attempt to reduce all learning to a single scale of two opposing traits, e.g. field dependence/independence. Finally, most instruments are self-report; an individual's ability to correctly self-assess is always an issue. Also, many adults, especially those who have participated in frequent learning activities, can 'see through inventories' and provide answers they feel are appropriate. This may be especially true in group settings or where the results may be used for personnel decisions.

**Administration and Ethics**. The administrative and ethical issues concerned with application can also be overwhelming. For example, Hill's comprehensive system to institutionalize learning style issues into a community college eventually faded because of the huge resource commitment needed to truly individualize learning. The ownership (locus of control) of LS results is an ethical concern. For example, should inventories administered for teaching design purposes be shared with participants? Should participants decide if they want to be "developed", i.e. exposed to, forced to use, or shown how to apply alternative styles? A significant debate in the literature –with administrative, ethical, and educational implications— concerns the deliberate matching or mismatching of student learning style with instructional style. Opinion is mixed among researchers whether matching is always appropriate. Whole brain research supports learning and utilizing various styles as the superior approach, which would necessitate mismatching in order to develop weak styles. However, Messick (1984) says that encouraging a weak trait may diminish the strong trait. Additionally, mismatched styles may discourage student motivation, prevent learning and retention of important material, and burden organizations with ineffective teaching/results. Should students have some voice in the matter?

**Relationship to Adult Learning Theory** The relationship of LS to adult learning theory is both vague and sparse in literature. Several issues need to be studied further if LS instrumentation is to be used wisely in adult situations. These issues and hypothetical questions about implications include:

Self-directed Learning. "It appears that readiness for self-directed learning is associated with skills in the right hemisphere and that there is a significant negative correlation with left hemisphere skills." (Torrance and Mourad, p.1171, 1978) Therefore, is a person who tests as a "left-brain learner" an inappropriate candidate for much of adult education?

Adult Learner Characteristics. Theories or research seldom mention adult learning characteristics or life stage theory. (Maturation and development for children is frequently addressed, but with inconsistent results.) Does adult preference for traditional methods of listening and reading reflect stage theory, learning style, or cultural learning? Which variable (stage, style, or culture) is strongest

Stability of Style. Researchers disagree about whether an individual's LS can and does change. Does aging correlate with a change in style? Do the changes follow a pattern?

## The Promise

Very little literature shows the actual application of LS theory/ instruments to work situations. (When located, such literature is usually just a review of a particular LS instrument being used by a company.) However, two good examples ofusing LS for actual training design include: The re-design of a manufacturing training program to be more hands-on and experimental after a LS survey showed most of the plant's workers to be manipulative, group learners (Walsh, Ferguson, & Taylor, 1997) and the design of a newEntrepreneurship program based on active learning instruction, such as field projects, experiments, role plays and simulations, after a study of entrepreneurs showed a preference for an active learning style.

(Holoviak,1990) Another suggested application uses LS instrumentation for evaluating employees against the LS required by a specific job. This recommendation is extremely common in academic writings. However, I think this practice should be avoided because using a "development/ learning" tool for Personnel decisions (hiring, firing, promotion, etc.) sends the wrong message to employees about the purpose of education, training, and development (as well as creating mistrust.)

The potential value of these instruments can supersede the problems if instrumentation is used as a point of awareness and discussion versus a prescription for decisions about people or costly expenditures. I think honesty with the audience about instrument limitationsand the allowance for adults to reject results as invalid are critical. The following is a comprehensive list of potential, responsible uses of LS—if the concerns noted in this paper are respected. However, the most important use is self-awareness of style on the part of both educator and student. Self-awareness must come before utilizing LS for any of these instructional or personal changes:

1. Administer appropriate inventories to audience prior to course design and media preparation.
2. Consider course evaluations in light of Learning Style profiles.
3. Structure small group exercises with different or similar styles, depending on purpose.
4. Help students understand their own style and how they might use it on the job and in class.
5. Discuss the hypothetical variety of profiles with class to develop awareness, appreciation.
6. Help develop coping strategies for students who may face incompatible learning situations.
7. Use in team-building, organizational development, and conflict work.
8. Match teaching method to learner style for high-risk content.
9. Mismatch teaching method to learner style, with explanation to students, for low-risk content.
10. Develop trainer self-awareness of own learning, teaching style and implications.
11. Hire training staff with complimentary styles.
12. Use more than one trainer, each with different styles, in a program.
13. Conduct "learning how to learn" classes for students based on several theories.
14. Analyze the Learning Style cultureof a company before designing a training program.

Despite the limitations and cautions which must be exercised, the use of Learning Styles theory and instrumentation is probably worth the time needed to determine the appropriate inventory and usage. As Claxton and Murrel summarize (1987), "Students who learn about their own style achieve higher grades, have more self-confidence, more positive attitudes about their studies, and more skill in applying their knowledge." I would anticipate this is also true for adult audiences and settings.

Attachments: Organizing Frameworks (Figures 1-9) List of Inventories/Tests, and References

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Figure 1
*Curry Onion Ring Model 1983*

**Cognitive Personality**
*Witkin*
*Myers-Briggs*
*Kagan*

**Information Processing**
*Kolb*
*Honey and Mumford*
*Schmeck*

**Instructional Preferences**
*Grasha-Reichman*
*Rezler and Rezmovic*

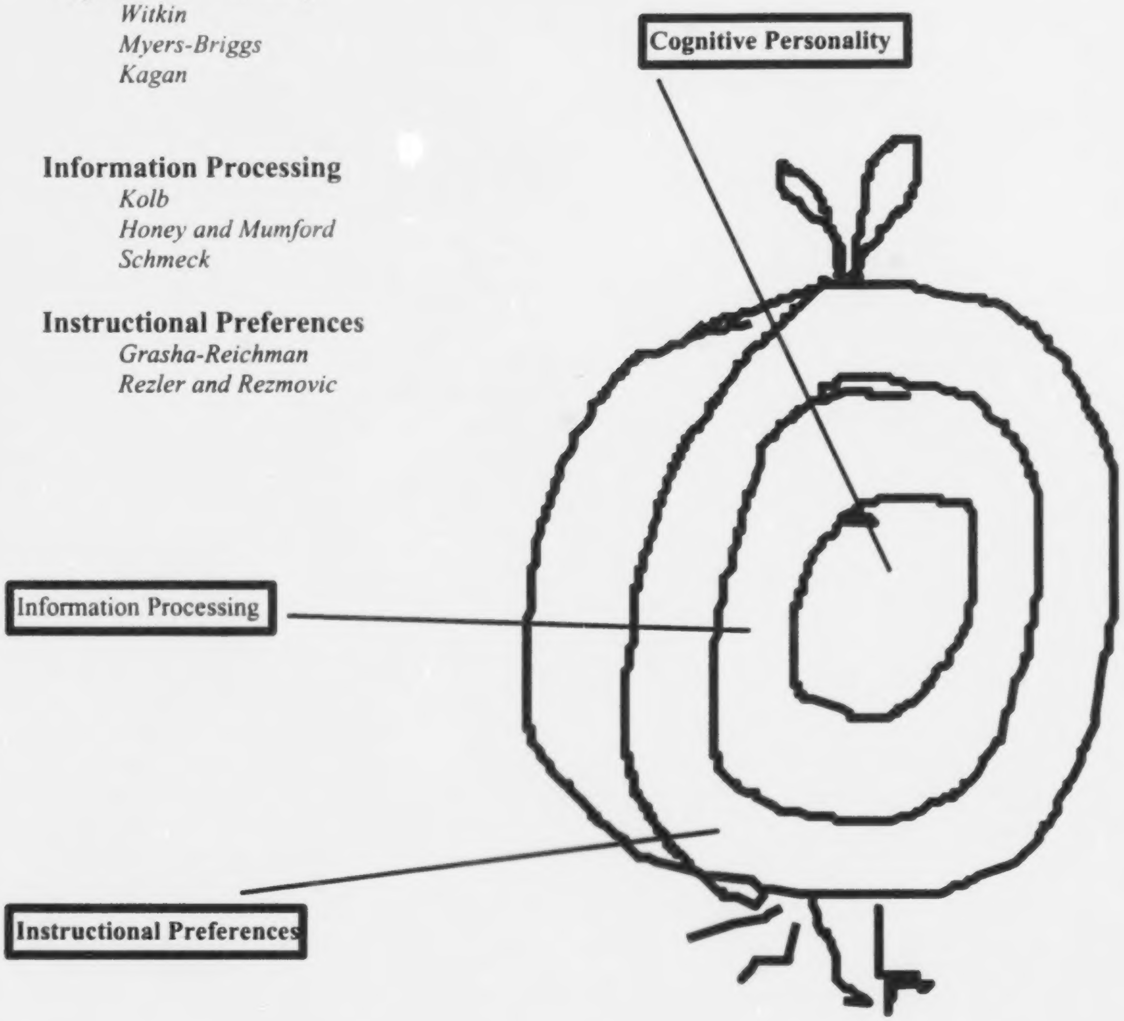

Cognitive Personality
Information Processing
Instructional Preferences

Figure 2

***Claxton and Murrel 1987 Adaptation of Curry***

**Personality**

*Witkin*
*Myers-Briggs*
*Kagan*
*Omnibus Personality Inventory*
*Holland Typology*

**Information Processing**

*Pask*
*Schmeck*
*Kolb*
*Gregorc*

**Social Interaction**

*Hill*
*Canfield*

**Instructional Preference**

*Grasha-Reichmann*
*Fuhrmann-Jacobs*
*Eisen*

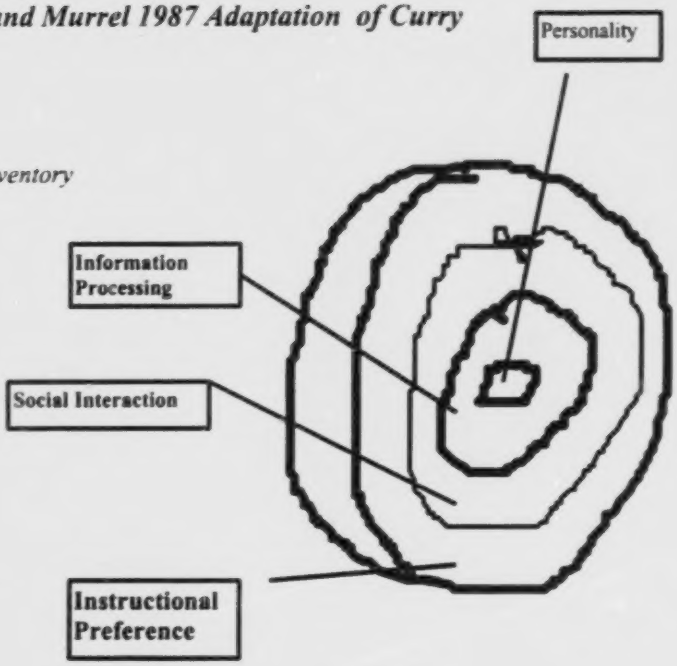

Personality
Information Processing
Social Interaction
Instructional Preference

Figure 3

***Saddler-Smith 1997 Adaptation of Curry***

**Cognitive Personality**

*Witkin*
*Riding/Cheema*
*Hayes/Allinson*
Wholistic/Analytic
Verbalizer/Imager

**Information Processing**

*Kolb*
*Honey and Mumford*

**Studying Approaches**

*Entwistle and Tait*

**Instructional Preferences**

*Grasha-Reichmann*

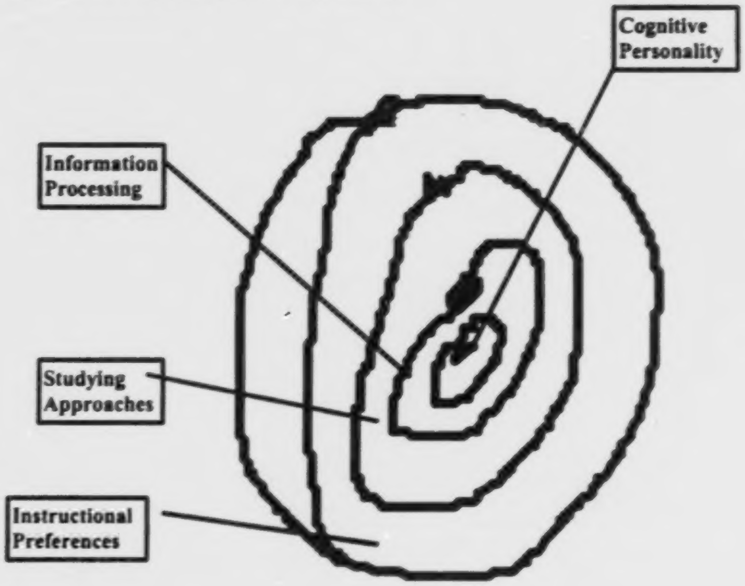

Cognitive Personality
Information Processing
Studying Approaches
Instructional Preferences

Figure 4

*Variations on a single bi-polar Scale, by Schmeck, Kirby,etc. 1979+*

**Global------------------------------------------------------------Analytic**

also known as

**Lumper------------------------------------------------------------Splitter**

is also known as

**Field Dependent------------------------------------Field Independent** *(Witkin)*
**Holist---------------------------------------------Serialist** *(Pask)*
**Concrete-------------------------------------------Abstract Analytical**
**Relational ways of knowing-------------------------Objectivist knowing**
**Global---------------------------------------------Articulated**
**Impulsive------------------------------------------Reflective** *(Kagan)*
**Global---------------------------------------------Analytic** *(Kirby)*
**Right-Brain----------------------------------------Left-Brain** *(Torrance)*
**Connected Knowing----------------------------------Separate Knowing**
**Intuition------------------------------------------Analysis**

flexibility in usage of two poles equals best style:

**Versatile** *(Pask)*
**Syntheses** *(Schmeck)*
**Whole Brain** *(Torrance)*
**Integration** *(Kirby)*

Figure 5

*Blakemore 1985*

**Cognitive Styles--------vs--------Environmentally Modifiable Styles**

| **Coginitive** | **Social** | **Motivation** | **Physical** | **Instructional** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Torrance* | *Dunn* | *Dunn* | *Dunn* | *Dunn* |
| *Kolb* | *Canfield* | *Canfield* | | *Canfield* |
| *Hill* | *Hill* | *Hill* | | *Hill* |
| *Hanson & Silver* | *Grasha & Reichmann* | *Grasha & Reichmann* | | *Grasha & Reichmann* |
| | *Jacobs & Fuhrman* | | | *Jacobs & Fuhrman* |
| | *Babich* | | | *Babich* |
| | | | | *Renzuli* |
| | | | | *Hunt* |

Figure 6
***Bonham 1988***

**Cognitive Style---------------------------vs.-------------------------------Learning Style**
(bi-polar, projective) (numerous, self-report)

*Witkin*
*Kagan*

*Hill*
*Kolb*
*Dunn, Dunn, Price*
*Grasha-Reichmann*
*Canfield*
*Torrance*

Figure 7
***Raynor and Riding1997adaptation of Grigerenko and Sternberg 1995***

**Cognition**

- **Wholist-Analytic**
  - **Perceptual**
    - *Witkin*
  - **Impulsive/Reflective**
    - *Kagan*
  - **Convergent/Divergent**
    - *Guilford*
  - **Holist/Serialist**
    - *Pask*
  - **Random/Sequential**
    - *Gregorc*
  - **Assimilator/Explorer**
    - *Kaufman*
  - **Adaptor/Innovator**
    - *Kirton*
  - **Intuition/Analysis**
    - *Allinson/Hayes*
- **Verbal-Imagery Cognitive**
  - *Galton,Bertet, Riding/Taylor*
- **Model of Cognitive Style (Integrates both Wholist-Analytic and Verbal-Imagery)**
  - *Riding*

**Personality**

- *Myers-Briggs*

**Learning/Activity**

- **Process-Based**
  - *Kolb*
  - *Entwistle*
  - *Honey & Mumford*
  - *Gregoric*
  - *Schmeck*
  - *Biggs*
- **Preference-Based**
  - *Grasha &Reichmann*
  - *Dunn,Dunn,Price*
- **Cognitive Skill-Based**
  - *Ramirez & Castendada*
  - *Reinert*
  - *Hill*
  - *Letteri*
  - *Keefe*

Figure 8

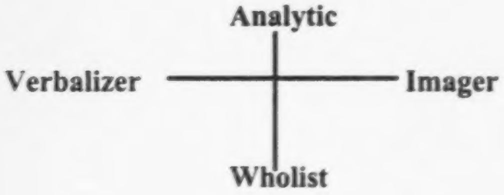
*Keefe 1982*

| **Cognitive**<br>(information processing) | **Affective**<br>(attention, emotion, valuing) | **Physiological**<br>(biological response) |
|---|---|---|
| **Perception**<br>**kinesthetic/psychomotor**<br>**visual/spatial**<br>**auditory/verbal**<br>*Edmonds Learning Style* | **Conceptual Level**<br>(degree of structure)<br>*Hunt Paragraph Completion* | **Environmental**<br>*Dunn, Dunn, Price* |
| **Field Independence/Dependence**<br>(analytic/global)<br>*Witkin Group Imbedded Figures* | **Locus of Control**<br>*Rotter I/E Scale* | **Time Rythms**<br>*Dunn Time Questionnaire* |
| **Transaction Ability**<br>(2 dimensions)<br>*Gregorc Style Delineator*<br>**concrete v. abstract**<br>**random vs sequential** | | |
| **Cognitive Profile**<br>(multi-dimensions)<br>*Charles Letteri Cognitive Profile* | | |

| **Cognitive and Affective**<br>(combines both) | **Cognitive, Affective and Physical**<br>(combines all three) |
|---|---|
| *Myers-Briggs*<br>*Hill* | *Dunn, Dunn, Price* |

*Figure 9*

***Riding and Cheema 1991***



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Appendix 1

## List of Inventories/Tests Commonly Referenced in Literature

(Incomplete data for some listings)

| PrimaryAuthor | Inventory/ Publication | Related Theory | Key Traits Measured/Terms | Target Age |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Babich* | C.I.T.E./ | visual, linguistic, auditory perception | cognitive, social expressive, vocational environmental | child, adol. |
| *Canfield* | Learning Style Inventory/1976 | not cognitive; Maslow, McLelland | conditions, content, mode, expectations | any |
| *Cooper & Brown* | Learning Style Inventory/ | | | adoles. |
| *Dixon* | Prescription for Learning | | multiple 32 factors | coll/ adult |
| *Dunn, Dunn, and Price* | Learning Style Inventory/ 1978 | not cognitive; conditions | environment,emotion social,physical,psych | ,gr.3-12 |
| *Dunn, Dunn, and*<br>adult<br>*Price* | PEPS/<br>1977/1982 | not cognitive<br>conditions | environmental,<br>emotional, sociological/physical | |
| *Dunn, Dunn, and Price* | Time Questionaire | not cognitive | preferred work time | any |
| *Eisen* | LOGO 1 and II/ 1979 | attitudinal, not cognitive | learning-oriented, grade-oriented | any |
| *Entwistle and Tait* | Revised Approaches to Studying/ 1994 | | deep, surface, self-concept, direction | coll |
| *Gardner* | Schematizing Test | cognitive memory processing | leveling/sharpening | |
| *Goldstein and Blackman* | Conceptual Styles Test/ | | analytical, relational | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Grasha-Reichmann* | Grasha-Reichmann/ 1975 | social interaction | interaction styles: independent, dependent participant, avoidant, collaborative, competing | any |
| *Gregorc* | Gregorc Style Delineator/1982-90 (Transaction Ability) | experiential | concrete sequential, abstract sequential, abstract random, concrete random | adol., adult |
| *Guglielmino* | Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale/ | not cognitive | preferences and attitudes; autonomy | any |
| *Hagberg and Leider* | Excursion Styles Inventory |  | 27 variables |  |
| *Hayes and Allinson* | Cognitive Styles Index/ 1996 | cognitive | intiutive/analytic, whole brain | any |
| *Hendrix*<br>adult | Vocational Learning<br>Inventory/ | cognitive,socia | l<br>expressive, environ |  |
| *Hill* | Cognitive Style Map/ | , | abstraction,visual, tactile, auditory,motor social | any |
| *Holland* | Holland Typology | Personality | realistic, investigative, social, conventional, enterprising, artistic | adult |
| *Honey and Mumford* | Learning Style/ 1986-1992 | based on Kolb | activist, reflector, theorist,pragmatist | adult |
| *Hunt* | Conceptual Level Assessment/ 1978 | conditions | conflict,rules,structure, uncertainty,authority | 12+ |
| *Jacobs and Fuhrman* | Learning Interaction Inventory/ 1980 | social interaction | independent, dependent, collaborative | any |
| *Kagan, J.* | Matching Familiar | cognitive | impulsivity/ | any |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Figures / 1964 | | reflectivity | |
| *Kagan, N.* | Learning Strategies/ 1967 | cognitive | focusing/scanning | coll |
| *Kaufman* | /1989 | | assimilate/explore | any |
| *Kirton* | Kirton Adaptor-Innovator Inventory/ | | | any |
| *Kolb* | Learning style Inventory/1976/85 | experiential, Dewey, Lewin, Piaget | concrete experience reflective observation, abstract conceptual active experimentation | adult, |
| *Letteri* | Cognitive Profile/ 1980 | Cognitive: field dep. scanning,breadth, complexity, reflective, leveling, tolerance | Reflective,analytical, impulsive, global | |
| *Lotas* | /1979 | Jung | Affecitive and Cognitive | |
| *Mafex Associates* | TLC_Learning Style Inventory, Adult | Jung | | adult |
| *Malcom, Lutz, Gerken, Hoelke* | LS Identification Scale/ 1981 | Info reception, self-concept | | child |
| *Manzo* | Learning Preference | | adult basic ed | adult |
| *Martin* | Subsumed Abilities Test and Measure of Learning Efficiency/ | | ability and willingness to learn | any |
| *McCarthy* | 4-Mat | Kolb and Torrance | | |
| *Melzer* | Surveys of Problem-Solving and Ed Skills/ | | | 9-15 |
| *Menninger Inst.* | Squares Test | Cognitive | leveling/sharpening | any |
| *Myers and Briggs* | Myers-Briggs Type Indicator/1962 | Carl Jung's theory of conscious psychological type | bi-polar dimensions: extrovert/introvert, sensing/intuition, | adult |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | thinking/feeling | |
| *Oakland, Glutting, Horton Oen* | Student Styles Questionnaire/ Learning Activities | | | child/ adoles. |
| *Ramirez and Castenada* | Child Rating Form/ 1974 | field dependence, related to culture | field dependence, authority, peer orient | child |
| *Reinert* | Edmonds Learning Style Identification Exercise (ELSIE) | stimuli | visualization, written word, listening, activity | |
| *Renzulli and Smith* | Learning Style Inventory/ | instructional preferences | projects;drills;peer teaching,discussion, games, independent research, simulation, lecture, programmed inst. | gr.4-12 |
| *Rezler and Rezmovic* | Learning Preference Inventory/ 1981 | instructional preferences | | student |
| *Riding* | Cognitive Styles Analysis/ 1991 | cognitive | wholist/analyst<br>verbal/imager | any |
| *Rotter* | Internal/External Scale/1959 | locus of control | | |
| *Schmeck* | Inventory of Learning Processes/ 1977 | deep/elaborative/ shallow thinking cognition | deep processing, elaborative process, fact retention, methodical study | any |
| *Schmeck* | Revised Inventory of Learning Processes/ 1991 | personality and | academic self concept reflective processing agentic processing, methodical study | 16+ |
| *Silver and Hanson* | Learning Style Inventory/ 1980 | Jung | sensing thinker, sensing feelers, intuitive thinker, intuitive feeler | any |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Stottz, McDermott, Green, Francis* | Study of Children's Learning Behaviors | | | pre-k<br>Gr. 4 |
| *Torrance* | Your Style of Learning/Thinking/ 1978 | Right/Left Brain | logical,analytical, visual-spatial, verbal nonsequential, divergent | any |
| *Torrance* | Human Information Processing/ | Right/Left Brain | visual,memory,auditory preferred style | adult |
| *University of Cal.-Berkley* | Omnibus Personality Inventory | Personality; | thinking, handling feelings, relating to self and others | coll |
| *Webster* | Learning Efficiency | | | any |
| *Witkin* | Embedded Figures Test (EFT) 1949 and Group Embedded Figures (GEFT) 1971 | Field Dependency | field dependence/ field independence | coll |
| Zenhausern | Differential Hemisphere Act. | Right/Left Brain | spacial/visual,verbal | |

## Multiple Intelligences and Adult Learning:
## A Review of the Literature

Trenton R. Ferro

ABSTRACT: Many writers and researchers have explored the theory of multiple intelligences (MI) from the perspective of K-12 education. Since the theory appears to hold considerable promise, this investigation was undertaken to determine the extent to which MI theory has been applied to the field of adult education. Little actual research was found. Therefore, adult educators are encouraged to explore how MI theory might provide 1) insight into a better understanding of the nature and needs of our adult students and 2) valuable suggestions for helping them in their learning. In either case, a sizeable research agenda can be developed.

### Introduction

Howard Gardner (1983, 1991, 1993) and others (e.g., Armstrong, 1993, 1994; Campbell, 1994; Campbell, Campbell, & Dickinson, 1993; Gardner & Hatch, 1990; Lazear, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 1994; Teele, 1991; Thornburg, 1989), through their research and writings on the topic of multiple intelligences (MI), have made considerable contribution to the literature on cognitive development and learning. However, most of the research and writing, and the practical applications of the findings, have been devoted to K-12 education.

This exploration investigates research into the application of MI theory to adults as learners and to adult education programs and activities. Accepting this premise that adults, as well as children, possess multiple intelligences can help those of us working with adults on several fronts: 1) We can gain greater insight into why many adults now in ABE, GED, and literacy programs were unsuccessful in their earlier educational experiences. 2) We can gain new insights to help these same adults become successful learners. 3) We can understand better how to improve programming and delivery in any venue so that the learning experience for adults can be enhanced and their enjoyment in learning increased.

This investigation has followed the normal procedures used in conducting literature reviews. Several databases, including ERIC, PsychLit, and Dissertations Abstracts, have been queried using such sets of descriptors as "'Multiple Intelligences' and 'Adult*'" and "'Intelligence' and 'Adult*.'" The articles, chapters, books, and other documents thus identified have been organized according to the research approach involved: analytical research, action research, research studies incorporating MI into their theoretical bases, and prescriptive writing.

### Findings

#### Analytical Research

Although MI has received considerable attention and widespread endorsement, its application has been limited by the lack of a practical, reliable, and valid method of assessment. Shearer and Jones

(1994) have provided such an instrument, the *Hillside Assessment of Perceived Intelligences* (HAPI), which is comprised of 106 items: 58 items inquire about the level of skill in a particular domain, 37 are concerned with the frequency of participation in activities associated with each construct, and 11 ask about interest levels. In the fourth phase of the research and development of the HAPI, two approaches were used: a) correlations with concurrently administered tests and b) comparison of contrasted groups. A sample of 383 participants was recruited to assess the reliability and validity of the HAPI: 338 undergraduate and graduate students and 45 individuals who were enrolled in adult education courses, clinical patients, or volunteers solicited form the local community. This investigation into the concurrent validity of the HAPI with other instruments found the patterns of correlation coefficients to be generally supportive of the HAPI scales. However, and examination of the construct validity of the scales using contrasted groups produced mixed results.

Shearer (1997) has also tested a similar instrument, the *Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scales* (MIDAS), which also includes the naturalist intelligence. His 1997 report describes a number of investigations designed to test the validity and reliability of the MIDAS and a study in which 98 students participating in two sections of the career exploration class at a large Midwestern, state university used the MIDAS as part of the course. According to Shearer,

> The MIDAS has been found to posses adequate reliability and validity as a self-report measure of a person's multiple intelligences disposition. College students report that they find the Career Exploration class beneficial for clarifying career goals and selecting an academic major. They also report that the MIDAS Profile Report provides them with new information that is useful for increasing self awareness especially regarding skills and abilities. Consequently, students are better able to make educational choices and career plans with enhanced self awareness. (p. 14)

### Action Research

The application of MI to adult learners has been investigated through several action research projects. Several were carried out as part of the Adult Multiple Intelligences (AMI) Project sponsored by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. For example, Jean (1999) used a MI-informed approach to set up lessons with choices based on Gardner's theory. She found that learners in her GED classroom did choose activities that matched their strongest intelligences. Furthermore, students with learning disorders and attention deficit disorders appeared to be more involved in learning. Similarly, Quiñones and Cornwell (1999) found that MI approaches helped overcome resistance to learning in GED classrooms.

Summarizing the experience of ten teachers involved in the AMI project, Kallenbach found six themes emerging: a) "Using an MI framework leads teachers to offer a greater variety of learning activities" (p. 16). b) "Observing students' learning preferences generates valuable information about students' strengths that can inform the development of future lessons" (p. 17). c) Teachers often begin applying MI by having students assess their own intelligences, but a range of factors affects whether students find the assessment useful or meaningful" (p. 18). d) "Students' regular reflection on their learning shifted and broadened their paradigms of effective and acceptable teaching and learning practices" (p. 18). e) "Teachers perceive a shift in the balance of power in the classroom when they offer students intelligences-informed choices in how they learn and express their understanding" (p. 19). f) "MI-informed education encourages teachers to learn more about their students, and may cause them to increase their expectations of students" (p. 19).

Among another set of action research projects, conducted by the Boston Inquiry Collaborative on Learning Disabilities and Lack of Progress (Merson, 1995), two were devoted to the application of MI. Hogan (1995) and her colleague used a twofold approach in her Office Systems Training Program at the Asian American Civic Association in Boston, where most of her students came originally from China and Vietnam. One part involved the administration of a checklist adapted from Armstrong (1993); the second was the development of a cluster of activities focused on each of the seven intelligences (Gardner has since added an eighth). Although she will need to revise her approach to the administration of the checklist with future groups, Hogan (1995) concludes:

> I believe I've made a good start in using this approach. More needs to be done. My initial presentation to the students will be revised. I'll include more hands-on activities. However, I think my students have a better understanding of themselves now as a result of this. And I feel confident, as I improve this approach, that any LD students in my class will definitely find learning English easier. (p. 21)

Streck (1995), who works with ABE and GED students in a shelter for homeless women, asked the question: "What will my student and I discover if we look in her autobiography for evidence of the causes of a failure to learn, and how can I use the theory of multiple intelligences to make this process of uncovering a positive one?" (p. 52). She interviewed two of her students to develop an educational biography. Then, on the basis clues revealed in each biography, she developed learning strategies that related to the MI strengths revealed in the interviews. Although recognizing the need for further research, her initial experience was sufficiently favorable to encourage her to use this approach with modifications.

Although not based on an action research project, Christison's (1996) own experience lays the foundation for her approach to using MI with ESL/EFL students. Similar to the approach described and used by Hogan (1995), Christison (1996) begins with a MI inventory that she and her students have developed collaboratively and then draws from a pool of activities she has developed. She also describes the four stages involved in planning lessons that teach with multiple intelligences, a developmental sequence she has adapted from Lazear (1991b).

In a similar fashion, Donovan and Iovino (1994) share the results of their experience using portfolios in undergraduate teacher education at Molloy College. The use of multiple intelligences portfolios is supported by Gardner's Project Zero Classroom and by the Arts Propel curriculum and assessment project at Harvard University. The authors' experience is supported by a review of the literature on the application of MI and on the use of portfolios.

### Studies Incorporating MI Theory

Some studies, while not investigating MI theory directly, have incorporated MI into their theoretical base. Leach's (1991) ethnographic study of six Accelerated Learning Language Teachers of Suggestopedia (ALTOS) at a selected Language and Cultural Center found that these ALTOS do as the literature says they do: By utilizing methods that are brain-compatible vs. brain antagonistic, learning can be accelerated. The theoretical rationale for the study was based upon the work of Lozanov, creator of Suggestopedia; Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences; and Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory.

Coil (1998) developed class activities and assignments that integrated MI theory with computer-assisted learning (CAL) materials in a formal education setting for adult learners at a community college. Participating students expressed positive sentiments about the use of computer tutorials and hypermedia instructional materials and the variety of activities emerging from the use of MI theory; all students who completed the course showed positive gains in knowledge. Nevertheless, the high number of dropouts (50%) corresponded with an abnormally high number of students in the course who were taking remedial classes. According to Coil (1998), the results underscore the importance of basic skills for self-directed use of interactive multimedia.

### Prescriptive Writing

Although not undertaking any research projects of their own, a number of writers have been convinced sufficiently of the theoretical strength of MI to endorse its use and application to settings involving adult learners. For example, Brougher (1997) calls for making adult education more stimulating by creating a classroom environment that is conducive to the development of the seven [sic] intelligences as proposed by Gardner; she applies these concepts to graduate education as illustrative examples. Cohen (1997) explores how the application of Gardner's MI theory can be used in creating a classroom environment that allows and encourages students to experience transformative learning and reassess themselves and their past experiences. Taylor-King (1997) summarizes and espouses the application of MI theory to the education of homeless adults. Meanwhile, Visser (1996) reviews several models for whole-brain learning, including Gardner's MI theory, and reviews favorably several games designed to stimulate the whole brain and all the senses.

## Conclusion

It is readily apparent that there is a dearth of analytical studies devoted to examining how the application of the MI theory might help adults learn, grow, and develop--and how we as educators of adults can use the theory to aid adults in their growth processes. Furthermore, the two mentioned above used samples drawn primarily from the college classroom, and both studies examined the use of an assessment instrument. Gardner and Hatch (1990) warn that while assessments have to be developed in order "to demonstrate that the intelligences are relatively independent of one another and that individuals have distinct profiles of intelligences" (p. 7), researchers must remember that

> MI Theory grows out of a conviction that standardized tests, with their almost exclusive stress on linguistic and logical skills, are limited. As a result, the further development of MI Theory requires a fresh approach to assessment, an approach consistent with the view that there are a number of intelligences that are developed--and can best be detected--in culturally meaningful activities. (p. 7)

Consequently, it is probably appropriate that a number of studies describe action research efforts that have confirmed what many adult educators have felt intuitively: Classroom methods, strategies, and approaches developed on the basis of MI theory do work. These findings confirm the writings of those who have suggested, prescriptively, various ways in which MI theory can be applied in adult education. There is certainly much room for adult educators to explore how MI theory might provide 1) insight into a better understanding of the nature and needs of our adult students and 2) valuable suggestions for helping them in their learning. In either case, a sizeable research agenda can be developed, including many opportunities for practitioner and action research.

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# Improving the Reading and Writing Skills of Deaf Adult Learners: Lessons from a Deaf Learning Community

Thomas Flynn and Denise Davis

**Abstract:** Deaf adults entering college confront many obstacles in mastering English as a second language. The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of the research and literature upon which an award winning community college Deaf Learning Community was established as well as to offer suggestions to adult educators working with Deaf adult learners in the context of higher education.

## Introduction

Despite the plethora of research and research and literature related to language acquisition, bilingual/bicultural education, as well as the linguistics of American Sign Language (ASL), questions abound as to effective application of this knowledge to enhance the English reading and writing skills of Deaf adults. A particular concern relates to Deaf adults entering college who confront many of the same obstacles to improving the English reading and writing skills as do hearing students.

For Deaf adults the challenge of mastering English is complicated and compounded by the virtual isolation that may result from differences in both communication mode and in working in a second language. It is imperative that educators working with Deaf adults possess the cultural and linguistic knowledge base that underlies the teaching and learning strategies most effective in working with this group of adult learners.

## Historical Background

History is replete with stories recounting the suppression of Deaf culture and sign language (Harlan, 1984; Sacks, 1990). Sacks (1990) notes that the deaf education and liberation movement in the United States, which began around 1770, came to an abrupt halt shortly before the now infamous International Congress of Educators of the Deaf held in Milan, Italy, in 1880. Prior to that date prominent deaf educators, including Laurent Clerc and Edward Gallaudet, believed that while the development of a Deaf child's articulation skills might be desirable, the basis of primary instruction for Deaf children must include the use of sign language (Sacks, 1990).

At the Milan conference, where ironically Deaf teachers were denied the right to vote, oralism was declared the "official" approach to educating Deaf children. Thereafter, the use of sign language in education was prohibited. Oralism and the suppression of sign resulted in the dramatic deterioration in educational achievement of Deaf children who prior to that time had been literate, educated, and on par with their hearing counterparts (Sacks, 1990).

The suppression of Deaf culture and ASL remained virtually unquestioned until the 1960s and early 1970s when historians, educators, parents, and teachers began to raise critical questions. The general mood of the sixties, and the Civil Rights Movement, undoubtedly contributed to a movement toward Deaf identify, Deaf pride, and a closer reexamination of the premises underlying oralism (Sacks, 1990).

During the early 1960s research into ASL began in earnest with the publication of William Stokoe's (1960) seminal linguistic study establishing ASL as a legitimate language with its own unique grammatical structure and syntax. The sixties also ushered in a new wave of legislative initiatives including PL 93-112 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and PL 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act).

These two initiatives have had significant, positive impact on access to education for Deaf individuals. The passage of PL 94-142, mandating that children classified as "handicapped" be educated in the "least restrictive environment" (mainstreaming) contributed to a significant rise in the number of deaf students enrolled in public schools (Benderly, 1990; Padden & Humphries, 1988; Paul & Jackson, 1993; Sacks, 1989), as well as to a shift in state funding away from the residential schools (Padden & Humphries, 1988). However, the controversy over whether or not "mainstreaming" is the most or the least restrictive environment for Deaf children remains unresolved.

Many Deaf adults who were mainstreamed during elementary and/or high school are now enrolled in community colleges. Those who lack demonstrated proficiency in reading and/or writing English are often placed in remedial/developmental reading classes. The origins of their reading difficulties, as well as the avenues toward providing learning assistance for these individuals, may be quite different than those of hearing individuals. While adult educators may assume that continued mainstreaming and provision of interpreting services is sufficient to meet the needs of Deaf adults, for a Deaf adult whose first language is ASL, mainstreaming may indeed be the most restrictive educational environment. For these individuals, "Deaf only" classrooms, in which a bilingual-bicultural approach to improving English reading and writing skills is adopted, may provide the least restrictive educational environment.

## Theories of Language Acquisition

There are a number of theories that purport to explain language acquisition. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to examine each in depth "interdependence"theory (Cummins, 1989; Quigley & Paul, 1984) and "vernacular advantage" theory (Quigley & Paul, 1984) are clearly relevant to the improvement of English Reading and writing skills for Deaf adults who entering colleges.

Interdependence theories suggest that the development of first language (L1) and second language (L2) skills are interdependent. What these theories suggest that if L1 skills are inadequately developed, and L2 instruction is introduced, L2 instruction will interfere with the further development of L1 skills. Likewise, inadequate development of L1 will inhibit the acquisition of L2. Conversely, when L1 is well developed prior to the introduction of L2, knowledge of L1 will contribute to the development of a high level of competence in L2. (Cummins, 1984: Paul & Jackson, 1993; Quigley & Paul, 1984). Proponents of the developmental interdependence models of language instruction assert that continuing development of L1 is also essential (Quigley & Paul, 1984).

Some studies suggest that Deaf children of Deaf parents (DCDP) outperform Deaf children of hearing parents (DCHP) in the academic context (Quigley & Paul, 1984). These research findings may not be conclusive, as questions have been raised pertaining to possible confounds in research design. Proponents of interdependence theories of language acquisition nevertheless suggest that one explanation of this phenomenon might be that DCDP have early access to language acquisition, whether ASL or some other form of Signed English.

The "vernacular advantage" theory (Quigley & Paul, 1984) suggests that the best medium for teaching in a bilingual context is that of L1. Furthermore, proponents of this theory suggest that low levels of competence in either language, as well as academic failure, may result when schools fail to recognize the impact of a student's L1 and culture. It is argued that students cannot learn in a language that they do not understand. Thus, unless content classes are taught in L1 while students are acquiring English, academic retardation may result (Cummins, 1989). This may be an even more critical issue when the student is Deaf, and acquisition of L2 (spoken English) is clearly difficult if not impossible to achieve. It a Deaf student has ASL or some form of Signed English as his/her L1, it follows that these forms of sign should be used for academic instruction, and that unlike hearing speakers of English as a second language, this continue for the duration of their academic pursuits.

Clearly the causes of academic difficulty for a Deaf learner are not limited to linguistic mismatch. As Cummins (1989) notes, one must also consider the historical and social factors that indicate the extent to which schools reflect power relationships in the broader society. Radical educators argue that the purpose of schools is reproduction of the dominant culture in a society (Giroux, 1983). Cummins (1984) notes that in the past schools have indeed contributed to the continuing insecurity and ambivalence" (p. 38) experienced by members of non-dominant cultures. This in turn may lead to withdrawal of academic effort.

It is clear that Deaf learners are members of a non-dominant cultural group. Historically, achievement in reading is much lower for Deaf students than those who are hearing (Bradley-John & Evans, 1991; King, 1985; Paul & Jackson, 1993; Quigley, 1984). Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan (1996), however, assert that the practice of using a variety of achievement tests to characterize the academic achievement of Deaf children is irresponsible" as only one, the Stanford Achievement Test, has been adapted for the hearing-impaired.

Rising hostility toward language minorities during the mid-1990s in the U.S. has given rise to a new wave of concern within the Deaf community. Major lobbying groups have raised millions of dollars in an attempt to amend the constitution prohibiting government use of languages other than English in a multitude of situations, with surveys indicating that as many as three out of four Americans support this amendment. Lane, Hoffmeister, and Bahan (1996) assert that it is critical that opponents of bilingual-bicultural education realize that America's Deaf children can not learn English merely by "making their way" in society, given that spoken English is physiologically inaccessible to them. These scholars further note that "if the history of the education of the Deaf over the past 125 years proves anything, it is that employing spoken language or artificial signing systems does not lead to English mastery or to academic success in general (p. 299)."

### Types of Bilingual Education Programs

Once the basic tenets of interdependence and/or vernacular advantage theories are understood, questions naturally follow pertaining to the factors that need to be taken into consideration in improving English reading and writing instruction for Deaf adults entering community colleges. The cultural assumptions inherent in various types of bilingual education programs become apparent when the program goals of each is examined. "Assimilation" programs have as a goal integrating the minority language member into the majority, often at the expense of the minority language and./or culture. By contrast, programs focused on "cultural separatism" attempt both to preserve and to maintain the minority language while the majority language is being acquired (Quigley & Paul, 1984).

There is a continuum along which various bilingual programs fall, ranging from "submersion" programs, where students are plunged into the new language with little or not support, to various "developmental" or "immersion" models, where both L and L2 are employed either with equal status, or nearly so. In these types of programs, the goal is development of both L1 and L2, and both languages are used in some proportion for teaching content (Quigley & Paul, 194).

Cummins (1984) suggests that this last model for bilingual education results in the most academic gain. Legaretta (1979) examined the effects of five different bilingual programs and concluded that the most beneficial was the program utilizing L1 and L2 on a 50/50 basis. The most successful models are "additive" (Cummins, 1989; Quigley & Paul, 1984) in that implicit in these models is the clear intent to develop L2 skills at no cost to the continuing development of L1.

### Implementation of a Bilingual/Bicultural English Reading and Writing Class

Historically, the preponderance of research and/or literature pertaining to acquisition and/or improvement of English reading and writing skills by Deaf learners has revolved around the education of children. It can be argued, however, that the academic characteristics of Deaf adult learners in a college setting do not significantly differ. This is especially so for those placed in developmental/remedial English reading and writing classes. For those individuals fluent in a L1, that language is likely to be ASL or some form of Signed English. Clearly, our linguistic intent was to develop a "additive" bilingual program, the goal being to develop the English reading and writing skills of Deaf adults, but not at the cost of their signing skills.

Lane, Hoffmeister, and Bahan (1996) delineate six principles of bilingual/bicultural education that are most transferable to the education of Deaf Learners. These are (1) respect for the native language, (2) incorporating Deaf culture and heritage in teaching, (3) using the native language to increase understanding of content (4) increasing the complexity and metalinguistic knowledge of the native language, (5) developing transfer strategies sign language to English, and (6) developing metalinguistic awareness of how English is used in various settings and situations (p 305). Hence, the bicultural aspect of our Deaf Learning Community was viewed as being equally important as the bilingual aspect.

Since its inception in the fall of 1997, the nucleus of our Deaf Learning Community has been a team-taught, multi-level, linked reading and English class. Students are encouraged to enroll concurrently in Reading and English classes. One textbook is selected for use in both classes. Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan (1996) suggest that a rational approach to teaching English as a second language to Deaf learners must begin with a contrastive analysis of English and ASL grammar. Lessons must be conducted in ASL and guide the Deaf learner through a progression of English grammar. Instructors need to be trained in new ways and in new subjects, including ASL. Instructional staff must be skilled in use of ASL, and knowledgeable about ASL structure.

Since the 1970s our institution has provided many services for Deaf college students, including interpreting, note-taking, tutoring and English classes. By the spring of 1996 we began active recruitment and/or training of instructors fluent in ASL and/or some form of Signed English, and are familiar with Deaf culture (Gallimore, 1993). We continue to strive toward attainment of that goal. While two interpreters are present in the reading/English class, their participation levels fluctuate, as both instructors sign. Additionally, in the spring of 1998, and continuing though the academic year 1998-1999, Deaf Supplemental Instruction Leaders were hired to attend class and to assist Deaf learners outside of class in completion of homework assignments.

## Evolution of a Deaf Learning Community

During the fall semester of 1997 our first cross-disciplinary link was established as students enrolled in our Deaf Communications Studies (DCS) Program joined the Deaf Learning Community. At the core of the DCS program are courses in American Sign Language, Deaf Theatre, Deaf History and Culture, Etymology, Interpreting, and Transliterating. Deaf students attended DCS Etymology classes, DCS students attended the linked Reading and English classes, and study groups comprised of students from DCS and the linked classes formed. Both groups of students worked to expand their English vocabulary and to associate ASL signs with English words – a process equally important to both groups.

During the spring of 1998 we were able to recruit a Deaf professional, a graduate of Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., to teach a signed Political Science class. Students enrolled in that class were able to use their Political Science textbook as the basis for practical applications of the study strategies and vocabulary acquisition techniques taught in reading and English. Additionally, that semester a signed section of our Freshman Academic Orientation Class (Success in College) was also established.

These cross-disciplinary links were part of a coordinated, cross campus effort to include Deaf culture and heritage across the curriculum. This effort has continued to date, and culminated in April of 1999 with the inclusion of a Deaf authored, Deaf-Student directed, one-act play staged during our institution's writing awareness week. Prior to writing awareness week, adult learners in reading and English class studied the play, and met with students from a minority literature class for a discussion of Deaf literature. With the support of our Office of Student Development, we were able to bring the playwright from Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., to present a workshop on the play writing process following the play. This event, a one-time presentation, was the direct result collaboration cross-campus effort that culminated in a full-house and a valuable learning experience for students, staff, and faculty, both Deaf and hearing.

## From Theory to Practice: Lessons from a Deaf Learning Community

Given the diversity in background and linguistic experiences, it is extremely difficult to make generalizations about the English reading and writing skills of Deaf adult learners. Up front, we can state with confidence that without profound respect for Deaf culture and for American Sign Language, educators working with Deaf adult learners are unlikely to experience much success. That said, we offer these recommendations:

The Translation Process. Remember that the thinking ability of Deaf adults is the same as that of hearing adults. As with most linguistic minority populations, Deaf people tend to think in their native language, translating from their L1 into their L2. These skills will range from word-for-word substitution to true translation. Most Deaf adult learners dislike English classes, because they have studied English for years and "still can't do it right." Be as encouraging as possible.

Instruction. Remember that Deaf individuals receive virtually all of their information through their eyes. Therefore, the more visual your presentation, the more effectively you will communicate with the Deaf learners. Use overhead projectors, cartoons, diagrams, PowerPoint presentations, or charts whenever possible. Get to know your interpreter, and give her/him the latitude needed to interpret properly. Tactics of effective classroom interpreting may include pointing to displayed pictures or objects, "shadowing" the instructor as he or she moves about the classroom, and requesting clarification from the instructor, which may involve momentarily interrupting the lecture. The interpreter may want to meet with the instructor outside of class to discuss technical terminology, and may request a copy of the textbook to become familiar with terminology and concepts. The more you accommodate your interpreter, the more effective your instruction of Deaf learners will be.

Teaching English Grammar. Try to adapt existing English as a Second Language materials for use with Deaf learners. While hearing ESL students will have a new grammar pattern reinforced by radio, television, and speech, Deaf learners may need to practice writing a new pattern until it becomes ingrained.

Teaching the Writing Process. Start with the most general goal and work toward more specific goals. Begin with the controlling idea, mode of discourse, paragraphs, sentences, etc., working progressively toward smaller details. Deaf learners know or can learn how to narrate, describe, explain, support ideas, use examples, etc., although there is a tendency to rely on narration, as that is the most common form of discourse in Deaf culture. Deaf learners benefit from signing their ideas first, then videotaping these signed ideas. This separates the thinking process from the translation process and lets them focus on expressing themselves freely in their native language. The videotape can then be used to translate from sign to written English starting and stopping the tape as necessary, translating one "chunk" at a time. During this translation process, Deaf learners should be encouraged to use their English reference materials, including vocabulary sheets, dictionaries, irregular verb reference sheets, spellcheckers, etc.

Editing. Remember that ASL syntax is completely independent of, and radically different from, English syntax. Therefore, a sentence may have many of the right words in it, but in incorrect order. Many Deaf learners have difficulty with English verb tenses. It may be necessary to explain when a tense is used and the meaning of the tense, as well as how to form it. Most Deaf learners experience confusion with verbal adjectives. For example, while the words satisfy, satisfying, and satisfied are all signed alike, their English usages are very different.

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## On a Collision Course: Distance Education and Team Leadership Skills

Dr. David W. Frantz

Abstract

Two trends, one in organizations generally and one in educational institutions, should cause us to re-evaluate how and what we teach about developing collaborative team skills in management and leadership education programs. These trends are 1) the growth of distance education and web-based educational delivery systems, and 2) increasingly sophisticated technological approaches to work. This paper examines how the increasing use of technology in education may create different patterns of interpersonal interactions and create the need for new models to describe interpersonal interaction. Greater research needs to be conducted on how the move from traditional face-to-face interaction may lead to different patterns of collaboration and cooperation between adult learners.

### A Story

My fourteen-year-old son has developed a habit of playing “Red Alert” until the wee hours of the morning. For those of you unfamiliar with the world of computer software games, this is a rather highly developed war simulation game that can be played over the Internet against other opponents. They even have competitive rosters which tell who has won the most battles during the month with prizes being awarded for the top scoring participants. I am not sure whether it is the game itself (which is an affront to my pacifistic leanings), the time in front of a computer screen or the late night hours that bothers me more. Or maybe it is the fact that he can skillfully move around the screen at dizzying speeds where I can only lumber around. Despite his mediocre performance in school, my counseling psychologist friend assures me that he is learning some strategic and motor manipulation skills.

The decision to purchase a computer for my son was a source of major disagreement between my spouse and me. My worst fears have been realized. Far from being the “educational” tool that it might be, it has developed into the entertainment magnet for all of his free time. I have tried to explore why this bothers me so much, and I believe I have discovered the answer, much as I hate to admit it. Rightly or wrongly, rationally or not, I believe that he is on the slippery slope toward becoming a recluse—closeted in front of a computer screen, depriving himself of the opportunity to develop the interpersonal skills he will need to succeed in life. By now, I am starting to realize that this situation is just bringing to the surface my own feelings about what is happening in the world of teaching adults the skills of organizational leadership. As I see more and more distance education efforts, I see the interpersonal interaction being squeezed out of the educational environment. But I am also an advocate for being open to change, so I can’t accept an image of myself as being pulled kicking and screaming into the information age and the increasingly sophisticated technological world. It was only after writing this paper that I began to see some of the connections between the story recounted and the research issue identified below.

## The Research Issue

In recent years, leadership and management education has focused on the development of team leadership skills in future managers and supervisors. Leadership education programs have focused on the development of team-building and collaborative skills because of perceived organizational and community needs. These skill sets have been fueled by the advent of numerous employee involvement strategies such as continuous quality improvement, quality circles, self-directed teams and re-engineering programs. The techniques for teaching adults about leadership have reflected this emphasis and this can be seen in the increasing use of group-oriented curricular assignments such as case studies, role-plays and group projects.

Two trends, one in organizations generally and one in educational institutions, should cause us to re-evaluate how and what we teach about developing collaborative team skills in management and leadership education programs. These trends are 1) the growth of distance education and web-based educational delivery systems, and 2) increasingly sophisticated technological approaches to work. Both of these trends may be rooted in the growth and availability of technology and both may lead toward similar results. Perhaps we are just beginning to see the results of an increasing number of knowledge or information workers. But as these trends evolve, our understanding of collaborative or team-oriented leadership skills will also need to evolve.

## Why is this Research Issue Important?

The impact of these two trends will call for different approaches to leadership, particularly related to a leader or manager's ability to influence and motivate people in a group or team setting. It is the author's contention that both of these trends lead students and employees to more individualistic models of performance—in contrast to more group-oriented approaches of many employee involvement strategies. When educational courses are delivered through distance technology or other web-based methods, the interaction changes between both the instructor and students and the relationships between students. With less face-to-face interaction, educational work becomes more individually focused. As more and more jobs become computer based and information based, the same movement occurs—work becomes less team-oriented (at least in the traditional sense) and more individually oriented. In an extreme form, this may be seen in such trends as telecommuting. It may be argued that this makes it more important to link individuals together to achieve organizational performance, but different leadership challenges are created. It is important to establish a research agenda to understand whether these trends are creating a fundamental shift in team leadership skills required for the future.

On a practical level, if these trends are understood properly, they will have an impact on not only how we teach but also what we teach, particularly in the area of management and leadership education. For example, we might revise some of our concepts and curricular designs in adult education courses geared toward learning about the role of the supervisor or manager, leadership behaviors, conflict management or team development. Just as the advent of greater employee development strategies led to the requirement of greater team leadership abilities, the utilization of increasingly sophisticated technology may lead to different ways of working, and consequently, different required methods of team leadership.

## Exploring the Issues Further

The purpose of this paper is to identify research issues worthy of continued exploration. When it was originally reviewed, one of the reviewers questioned whether the paper addressed more of a research issue or a practical issue. This was fairly insightful and probably accurate. There is a practical issue in the sense that distance educators must be attune to how the instructional medium changes the interpersonal interactional dimensions of education. And this may have more of a practical dimension to it. On the other hand, there is a research issue related to how the interpersonal interactions and relationships are changing as a result of the use of distance technology instructional methods. It should be quickly acknowledged that there are many forms of distance education technology, each having its own unique effect on interpersonal relationships (Loeding & Wynn, 1999; Webster and Hackley, 1997). Our view of the subject may be improved by posing several questions: Is there any evidence that distance education is less interactive? Even if it is less interactive, is this a problem? Does the increasing use of distance education methods and increasingly sophisticated technology challenge us to view the concept of interaction itself differently?

First, is there any evidence that distance education is less interactive? The answer to this question depends on the nature of the instructional technology used, the characteristics of the instructor and the quality of the technology itself (Merisotis & Phipps, 1999). I suggest that we cannot definitively answer this question now for two reasons. On the one hand, there is not yet enough research. On the other hand, the technologies are still new enough, that we continue to encounter problems with the technical aspects of the delivery system itself. I suggest that a true measure of the interpersonal relationships actualized in distance education programs can not be ascertained until instructors are no longer needing to attend to the technology itself (assuming that this is a realistic goal).

Having stated this, even now we can make several observations. The literature is replete with numerous concerns raised about this issue. Almost every article written about distance education efforts somehow addresses this issue (Millichap, 1998). Intuitively, if not empirically, we can see that there is less face-to-face interaction. Second, at best, the nature of the interaction has changed. I suggest that one of the ways the interaction has changed (without major efforts on the part of the instructor to overcome this dimension) is that the interaction between teacher and student has become the focal point more than student to student interaction. Because of the nature of the technology itself, the instructor becomes more of a hub with spokes coming out to the students, and creating a cluster communication pattern in a group is more difficult. This is particularly interesting because it flies in the face of the overall impact of technology. Technology opens up access to the same information for all, and theoretically should create more all channel communication patterns or star patterns. Yet, it is not uncommon to see two or three individuals in an Internet chat setting having a separate communication with each other, disconnected from the ongoing conversation.

Second, even if it is less interactive, is this a problem? Another lawyer-like answer—it depends. Again, we may not have enough research to answer the question, but it also depends on what we are trying to measure. Farber makes a helpful discussion about how we might evaluate the outcomes of distance education when talks about approaching the subject with a three circle approach—competency measures, competence and education (Farber, 1998). A core issue here,

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which is not resolved in the literature or the research, is whether the overall educational development of adults suffers because of the use of distance education methods. Again, there are numerous articles addressing this issue as a concern for distance education designers. At the very least, some practitioners have felt strong enough about the subject to warn students that if they have a high need for face-to-face interaction, distance education is not for them (Neal, 1999).

Third, does the use of distance education methods and increasingly sophisticated technology challenge us to view the concept of interaction itself differently? It is here that I believe there is the most room for research. It is Farber again who suggests that we need to consider the importance of the learning context and at least implies that most distance learning (even synchronous interactive video) has decontextualized learning (Farber, 1998). Although it is not entirely clear what this means, there seem to be two elements worthy of exploration and these need to be separated. The first element is the change from interacting directly with people to interacting with the technology. The second aspect is probably the more individualistic character of the interaction. What happens once we become focused on a screen.

To return to the example of my son and his computer game. If we use this as an analogy, the traditional classroom approach might be compared to my son out playing a game of basketball with his friends. In the basketball game, the context is very direct. Rules of the game, sportsmanship, competitive behavior, trash talk and dribbling skills are learned in a highly interactive fashion. This is a non-virtual world (I find this a humorous way of referring to reality). Now, with the computer war game (virtual reality), the nature of the interaction has changed. Do we focus on the interaction between my son and the screen, my son and the distant Internet competitor or my son and his friends huddled around the screen (when this occurs). The social and interpersonal relationship skills learned in this de-contextualized or maybe re-contextualized environment are going to be different than those learned on the basketball court. But the world that he will enter, and the other adult learners I teach, may bear more resemblance to the computer war game than the basketball game. We can lament the passing of a more personal world or seek to develop a different model to relate to this changing world. It has taken me this long in the paper, and in my life, to question whether we haven't really evolved into a low touch/high tech world.

## Developing a Model to Understand These Issues

There is a need to articulate a new model of team interaction and team leadership skills. There are two key core concepts around which a new model can be articulated. First, a fundamental shift may be occurring regarding the definition of collaborative skills—which seems to be at the heart of team development skills. To understand the shift that has occurred in both education and industry, this model will describe an evolution from collaboration to connectivity. We may experience greater access to information and less organizational hierarchy because of available information, but the changes in technology have fostered greater connectivity without necessarily an increase in collaboration. It is certainly true that this connectivity has resulted in much greater sharing of information and in some cases, ground-breaking collaborative efforts—but even these may be traced more to individual initiatives rather than being viewed as the effect of leadership.

Second, a different model of human interaction needs to be explored which supports this model. Alongside of this proposed shift from collaboration to connectivity, we may describe a shift of interaction patterns from relational interaction to informational interaction. As individuals, when we move to greater communication through E-mail, list-serves and focus more on our personal computers rather than our face-to-face contacts, the nature of our interactions changes. When this occurs on a large scale in the workplace or the classroom, the leadership skills needed to influence and motivate groups also change. In my heart, I hope that the personal style of interacting will find its way back into our organizational systems. But yet, the market place is exponentially expanding in the e-commerce sectors. It is true that there is a need for unparalleled customer service and personal attention, but the bulk of transactions may now be carried out primarily between yourself and a computer screen. This may only serve as a disguise for the myriad of personal decisions and actions that must take place to fulfill your transaction. Nevertheless, the nature of our interpersonal cooperation and collaboration is changing, partly as a result of and partly caused by increasingly sophisticated technology.

## Linking Theory and Practice

The linkages between theory and practice have been noted in the previous sections. This represents a critical opportunity for interchange between adult education practitioners and theorists and industry participants. It is an opportunity for educational institutions to look at changes in their own technology (distance and web-based education) to see how this alters the way in which team work does or does not happen in an educational setting. It will enable us to view how students' perspectives about collaboration with their peers change when technological sophistication increases. At a practical level, many distance educators are already doing this. To undergird this, more concerted research efforts should be directed to identifying how the character of interpersonal interactions is changing. When combined with more research about the changing nature of the work world, this may result in the definition of a new set of leadership skills, all of which can then be taught over the Internet.

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# Mentoring and Women's Adult Development: Implications for Female Faculty

Sharon K. Gibson

## Abstract

Mentoring is explored as an avenue to enhance women's adult development, and specifically the development of female faculty in higher education. Overall, studies illustrate new faculty's lack of comfort with their work roles and priorities and suggest that support provided early in academic years contributes to career success in later years. Considering mentoring as an area of practice for women in academia is important as women are overrepresented in the new faculty ranks and have less access to informal networks. A review of adult development literature suggests that mentoring may be of great benefit for women, as women's identity development is seen as interdependent and their learning and development grounded in relationships. Theory on women's adult development supports the concept that women are oriented toward connectedness and, therefore, have the capacity to use the mentoring relationship to its fullest advantage. The establishment of mentoring relationships is proposed to contribute to the success of women faculty in the academic institution, as well as the enhancement of collaboration among all its scholars.

## Introduction

The potential benefits of mentoring as a means to enhance the career advancement of both men and women has been extolled in recent years. Although specific definitions of mentoring vary considerably in the literature, mentoring relationships tend to reflect some type of partnership between a seasoned member of an organization and a less senior member, i.e., one of junior rank or status. Research on the nature of mentoring relationships suggests that mentors can provide career, psychosocial, and interpersonal support to proteges (Bloom, 1995; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Noe, 1988; Struthers, 1995). Mentoring is often thought to be especially important for women as they are perceived to have less access to information and sources of support in organizations and have historically been in positions of lesser status. Specific to academia, Bentley and Blackburn (1992) compared the results from four national surveys of U.S. faculty conducted in 1969, 1975, 1980 and 1988 and found that, although the number of women entering faculty positions had increased over these two decades, status inequities continued to exist for academic women. While the concentration of women in lower academic ranks may be explained in part by their recent arrival in the work force, women still remained underrepresented in proportion to their fraction in society and continued to be concentrated in certain disciplines such as the humanities and social sciences. Henry, Stockdale, Hall, and Deniston (1994) also note that, despite tremendous growth in the number of women in male-dominated careers in academia and other professions, top level positions are not equitably distributed across gender.

In addition, Bentley and Blackburn (1992) propose that women may be particularly susceptible to the pressures facing junior faculty with respect to publication in that women are entering academia but have a success rate less than that of men. This factor combined with the findings of studies exploring the experiences of faculty entering academia suggests that the experience of female faculty in adjusting to the professorial role may be especially challenging and that collegial support for new faculty tends to be lacking (Boice, 1991, 1993; Sorcinelli, 1994; Whitt, 1991).

This paper will explore mentoring as an avenue to enhance women's adult development, and specifically the development of female faculty in higher education. I will first review concepts and ideas expressed by a number of theorists and writers regarding mentoring and adult development, with an emphasis on those who provide insight into women's adult development. Second, I will discuss the implications of mentoring as a means to enhance the adult and career development of women faculty in academia.

## Mentoring and Adult Development

A number of theorists on adult development have described the mentoring relationship and its role in the development of adults. Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McBee (1978) conducted an extensive study of 40 men and described the concept of a mentor as teacher, advisor, sponsor, host and guide, exemplar, and counselor but stressed that mentoring is less related to a formal role and defined more in terms of the character of the relationship and the functions the relationship serves. Levinson ascribed great importance to the role of mentoring in adult development and believed that not having a mentor was a significant barrier to one's psychosocial and career development. He noted that women appeared to have less mentoring than men partly due to the scarcity of female mentors. In addition, these women were primarily focused on their own survival in a work world dominated by men.

The importance of mentoring in adult development was supported by Valliant's (1977) longitudinal study of 95 male Harvard graduates, in that the most successful men were found to both have had mentors and been mentors. Mentoring is considered to be part of the developmental stage described by Erikson as 'generativity' in that in the middle adulthood years individuals begin to feel a need to provide leadership to and support for the next generation (as cited in Merriam, 1983). Valliant notes that the men found to be "the 'Worst Outcomes' were less clearly willing to assume responsibility for other adults" and ". . . gave less of themselves back to the world" (p. 350). Unfortunately, both Levinson's et al. (1978) and Valliant's (1977) research included only male participants and, as such, our ability to generalize or apply these findings to women is limited.

Other writers such as Sheehy (1976) look specifically at women's life patterns. Sheehy (1976) notes that, of those women studied who had gained recognition in their careers, all had experienced a mentoring relationship. She cites a study completed in 1970 by Hennig in which the lives of 100 female achievers (women who held positions as presidents or vice presidents of large businesses and financial corporations) were traced. Hennig found that all of the women studied had formed a deep and vital attachment to their bosses who served as their mentor, providing protection, interpersonal support, and career advancement opportunities (as cited in Sheehy, 1976). Sheehy identified potential issues regarding power and sexual nuances of a cross-gender mentoring relationship and expressed the concern that women may subordinate their own identity in favor of the relationship with a male mentor.

In looking specifically at women's adult development, Gilligan (1982) has proposed that women's identity development is interdependent rather than independent. "When women construct the adult domain, the world of relationship emerges and becomes the focus of attention and concern" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 167). Women's development is described in terms of 'voice' -- allowing women's voices to develop and to be heard (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1992). Kegan (1982, 1994) draws from constructive-developmental psychology with respect to emphasizing that the self is embedded in the context out of which the person grows. Development is described as a series of emergences from and relationships with "cultures of embeddedness" which include parents, families, schools, institutions, and mentors (Kegan, 1982, p. 118). This tension between autonomy and connectedness is inherent in the development of the participants in a mentoring relationship and shapes the quality of this relationship.

A number of researchers have described the phases of mentoring relationships for adults, indicating the different functions a mentoring relationship can provide at various stages of adulthood (Kram, 1983; Newby & Heide, 1992). Although a description of the various conceptualizations of the stages of mentoring is beyond the scope of this paper, it is perhaps important to identify those characteristics of a mentoring relationship that have been particularly noted to apply to women. In describing the multiple roles of the mentor in supporting women's adult development, Bloom (1995) observes that mentors stand in different relationships to proteges (behind, ahead, face-to-face, and beside) and emphasizes her belief that learning and human development for women is rooted in relationships. Her description of mentoring as an expression of 'care' in helping proteges develop is reminiscent of Gilligan's (1982) theory of the importance of responsibility and caring to women in their approach to solving moral and ethical dilemmas.

Johnsrud (1991) proposes a conceptual framework for mentoring based on the work noted previously by Kegan, as one that moves beyond the male models of adult development and incorporates values of affiliation, caring, and interdependence. Kegan (1982) describes three stages -- interpersonal, institutional, and interindividuality -- in which one progressively differentiates one's self and achieves the capacity to be both autonomous and connected. Specific to women, Kegan describes that the environment or culture reinforces women to ground their identities in their relationships while men's identities are based on their individual achievement or autonomy. This conceptualization has some specific implications for academic women and mentoring. As Johnsrud (1991) states:

> The orientation of women toward connectedness and their potential for interdependence suggests that academic women have the capacity to use the structure of the mentoring relationship to work through issues of dependency and autonomy and ultimately shape a relationship committed to the mutual growth and empowerment of both participants. (p.11)

## The Faculty Experience

In looking at the perceptions of faculty as they enter university life, there is reason to believe that the adjustment to the professorial role is fraught with difficulties. Boice (1991) conducted a study of 197 new faculty as teachers and found that faculty established comfort, efficiency, and student acceptance related to their teaching abilities slowly, if at all, over the course of successive semesters. In addition, collegial support was rated low and perceptions of collegial support did not improve over time. The experience of these new faculty is supported by a qualitative study conducted by Whitt (1991) in which she describes the experience of six (three male and three female) new faculty members. Overall, collegiality was a high priority for new faculty and in actuality, their experience was one of isolation and fragmentation. New faculty in this study keenly felt a lack of emotional and financial support and felt that they were given very little assistance in adjusting to their new role and environment. In addition, the absence of formal orientation processes and lack of avenues for establishing connections with other faculty contributed to their perceived lack of collegiality. Whitt (1991) suggests that in order for new faculty to "hit the ground running", they need "clearer directions about the track, more consistent information about the events in which they are running, and a much louder cheering section" (p. 195). Sorcinelli (1994) describes similar themes expressed by new faculty, including time constraints in research and teaching, lack of collegial relations, and inadequate feedback.

In looking at the role of a faculty member, Sundre (1992) has identified 249 attributes of faculty scholarship, indicating that the role of a faculty member is quite diverse. She does note, however, that publication is at the top of the list of most frequently cited faculty scholarship attributes. In researching differences in perceptions between senior and junior faculty, Johnsrud and Wunsch (1991) found that the highest priority for junior women was writing. The concern of the women expressed above with respect to writing is supported by Bentley and Blackburn (1992) who state that publication is the *sine qua non* of academia and influences a faculty member's reputation, ability to acquire grants, promotions awarded, and salary level. In measuring publication activity, Hickson, Stacks, and Amsbary (1992) studied the productivity of women scholars in the field of communications through an extensive analysis of communication journals. These authors found that although the 25 most prolific women had published many articles, most women scholars in the field of communications had published only one article (of those who had published at all). The data also indicated that the most prolific scholars tend to be consistent in their years of publishing and concluded that publishing early in one's career may be important in terms of continuing to publish over the course of one's career. If research productivity is a mainstay for academic disciplines, then the faculty member who does not publish at the level expected by the institution may be perceived as having less status and be less likely to achieve career advancement at that institution.

In exploring the phenomenon of faculty vitality, Baldwin (1990) interviewed 50 full professors nominated as being 'vital' in their fields and compared these results to a sample of 40 'representative' full professors. This author found a number of differences in how professors who are considered vital interact with their work environments. Most notably, nearly half of the vital professors indicated that administrators had helped them in some way as compared to only 20% of the representative professors. In addition, a sizable number of vital professors identified various forms of encouragement that had enhanced their careers. Similarly, Boice (1993) identified the lack of preestablished mentoring and social networks as indicative of maladaptive starts or what he terms 'early career fault lines' in the professorate for women and minorities.

Overall, these studies illustrate new faculty's lack of comfort with their work roles and work priorities and suggest that support provided early in academic years may contribute to career success in later years. Given that women tend to have less access to information and career support in organizations, one might posit that the adjustment issues identified above may be even more prevalent among women.

## Mentoring in Academia

A number of academic institutions have responded to the needs identified above and established formal mentoring programs for their junior faculty. Sorcinelli (1994) describes three such programs, two of which facilitate non-traditional partnerships such as those with retired faculty members, or with faculty outside the protege's institution. However, the prevalence of mentoring programs for faculty in academia appears to be relatively low. In a study of 347 men and women faculty members, Sands, Parson, and Duane (1991) found that only one-third of the respondents reported having a mentor at the university and concluded that mentoring relationships are not the norm for faculty in university settings. In addition, the study found that, in general, these relationships were established through mutual negotiation and not assigned by departments. Although mentoring relationships were most frequently established between assistant and full professors of the same sex, more women were mentored by either associate professors or by men due to the fewer number of available female full professors.

Addressing the challenges that African-American women faculty face in academia, strategies such as developing networks with African-American colleagues in other institutions have been identified as critical in counteracting feelings of isolation and in providing support for dealing with problems in the academic community. Both the establishment of mentoring relationships and building strong personal and professional networks are noted to be key in assisting African-American women faculty with institutional politics and in providing career and personal/emotional support (Bowie, 1995; Peterson, 1990).

If mentoring relationships are to be established for new faculty in academia, what factors should be considered in facilitating these relationships? In researching mentoring relationships, a number of studies in business and industry have explored the issue of gender and mentoring. Many have found no differences based on gender with respect to various aspects of career mentoring (Corzine, Buntzman, & Busch, 1994; Scandura & Ragins, 1993; Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1992). Others have shown that, on specific dimensions, there are perceived differences between same-gender and cross-gender relationships. In terms of interpersonal support at the CEO level, Tharenou (1995) surveyed over 150 CEOs and top managers in Australia and found that women CEOs reported more support from women (colleagues and superiors) than did men CEOs. Burke and McKeen (1995) conducted a study of 280 managerial women's beliefs and experiences about mentoring and found that women in cross-gender mentorships believed that same-gender mentorships were more desirable and tended to have more concerns about the public image of the relationships. In terms of perceptions of mentor roles in cross-gender and same-gender mentoring relationships, Ragins and McFarlin (1990) studied 510 employees in three research and development organizations and found that those proteges in same-gender mentoring relationships were more likely to agree that their mentor served a role modeling function. In addition, same-gender proteges reported engaging in more after work social activities with their mentors.

Specific to academia, Struthers' (1995) study of 165 female professors who had experienced mentoring at some point in their career found that a key factor related to the utilization of power to enhance their proteges' academic careers was the rank of the professor, regardless of gender. Johnsrud (1991) also identifies a number of problems in the traditional mentoring model for academia (due to the relatively few senior women academics, these tend to be cross-gender), which have more to do with the imbalance of power within the relationship than with gender. It has also been proposed that the way in which mentoring in academia is conceptualized is problematic in that there is an underlying assumption that women mentors "act as producers and reproducers of the patriarchal academy", when, in fact, women mentors also act in ways that resist those structures (Stalker, 1994, p. 365). These studies indicate that, due to the hierarchical nature and power structures of the academic environment, the mentor's rank and gender may be key factors in the establishment and success of a mentoring relationship.

## Conclusion

In summary, current research indicates that new faculty perceive significant barriers as they enter university life. Women faculty may experience these barriers to a greater extent than their male colleagues as women are overrepresented in the new or junior faculty ranks. Lack of collegial support and other orientation systems contribute to perceptions of isolation and difficulties in handling the conflicting demands of the faculty role. Overall, studies appear to suggest that support provided early in academic years may contribute to success in later years.

Mentoring has been identified in the literature as a potential avenue to support adult and career development. The potential benefits of mentoring for women may be more significant than for men, as women see the world more 'in relation' and their learning and development may be more grounded in relationships. Additional research needs to be conducted to determine how mentoring might best be structured in academia considering issues such as formal versus informal mentorships, cross-gender or same-gender mentorships, and the mentor's rank. Nonetheless, the review of the literature provides support for the inclusion of mentoring as a means to support the adult and career development of women faculty members. In addition, as suggested by Johnsrud (1991), one might also consider whether the establishment of mentoring relationships in keeping with values of connectedness and caring might be seen as a means to foster the capacity for interdependence across the academic institution. Through this means, benefits would accrue to both faculty members and the academic institution in terms of truly establishing a collaborative environment that supports the growth and development of its scholars and contributes to the quality of its accomplishments.

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Presented at the Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education
University of Missouri-St. Louis – September 22-24, 1999

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# Federalization of Adult Education in Oklahoma Under Governor "Alfalfa" Bill Murray, 1933-1941

Randal D. Ice and Robert E. Nolan

## Abstract

Cervero and Wilson (1996) have pointed out the importance of paying attention to the dynamics of working with people in the planning of adult education programs. This paper illustrates the interpersonal dynamics of planning that occurred during the adult education programs of the New Deal in Oklahoma. Specifically, it demonstrates how the entire structure of the program was the result of a failure to negotiate political "interests and power" (Cervero & Wilson, 1996, p. 1). When a conflict of personal interest and power arose between then Oklahoma Governor "Alfalfa" Bill Murray and the Washington establishment, the Oklahoma adult education program of the New Deal was federalized, but not before some notable failures.

Cervero and Wilson (1996) identified an aspect of program planning in adult education that omits the human dynamics of planning by espousing an approach best described as technical rationality. Indeed, according to Cervero and Wilson, the negotiation of political power within the program planning process is an often forgotten, but critical element. This historical analysis of the case of Governor Gill Murray during the days of the Works Progress Administration illustrates the case of an impasse in the negotiation of power and interests and the results of that impasse for the New Deal programs of adult education.

The background of the times in Oklahoma reveals a deep distrust of big business and big government as seen in the "Dust Bowl Ballads" of Woody Guthrie and the memos of Governor Murray to the adult education program planners and state officials under his charge. Governor Murray was a southern populist agrarian politician. He was a farmer at heart, distrusting of big business and Washington "outsiders." He believed that he represented what he called the middle class which he described as "lying between the privilege seeking and idle rich and the hopeless, indolent, idle poor." (Murray, 1945, Vol.II, pp.233-234). He was the primary author of the Oklahoma State Constitution, and controlled a powerful political base in the state. Using methods similar to those employed by Governor Huey Long of Louisiana, Governor Murray raised large amounts of money from teachers and other state employees unprotected by civil service laws or tenure acts by requiring them to purchase his newspaper, The Blue Valley Farmer, at expensive rates of subscription. Those who did not comply were fired from their jobs. This money allowed him to influence elections at all levels in the state, further enhancing his power base with compliant local officials (Bryant, 1968).

The Great Depression caused the introduction of numerous new federal programs designed to alleviate the suffering caused by the economic problems. Initially, the programs were organized around the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), and then combined into the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The national adult education program initially started as a relief effort by the Roosevelt Administration to employ 80,000 to 100,000 out-of-work teachers and other jobless educational personnel who were on the relief rolls at the beginning of the administration's term in 1933. The economic difficulties of the 1930s led to the collapse of the tax base which undermined many of the local educational efforts in the country.

As cash strapped school systems laid off many teachers, it became apparent that something had to be done. The programs of the New Deal were a practical response to an economic crisis. In a 1937 speech Harry Hopkins, President Roosevelt's aid said:

> A far greater number of white collar workers and professionals were unemployed than ever before. Manual labor was not the answer. Common sense told us that it was not only inefficient but wasteful to put an artist to work chopping trees or a teacher to digging ditches (as quoted in Proffitt, 1938, p. 23).

Although the political necessity of taking dramatic action cannot be denied, the programs were innovative and idealistic. The objectives of the Federal Plan for adult education as seen in the documents of the FERA and the correspondence of Hopkins were classical examples of technical rationality. They were designed to meet needs of people who were unemployed, perhaps in such economic difficulties that they might have been susceptible to fascist solutions to the problems faced by the people. Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's appointee as Director of the FERA, believed that adult education was a way of overcoming the problems of the period. With economic difficulties epidemic across the country, education was a welcome alternative to unemployment for both the teacher and the student. Initially, the program dealt with a wide variety of classes and programs in general education, literacy and naturalization, parenting and homemaking, vocational rehabilitation, and worker's education. In classes as diverse as first aid, safety and health, braille, aviation, crafts and cultural activities; many basic skills were taught. By the time the program was ended by the war effort in 1942, as many as 200,000 instructors, administrators and clerical employees had been employed and millions of adults had participated in the classes (Campbell, Bair, & Harvey, 1939).

The initial thrust of the program began in August of 1933 when Hopkins wrote to state governors and FERA administrators and authorized them to spend state relief funds to hire jobless teachers for reopening rural schools closed due to lack of rural tax receipts. He also authorized the hiring of unemployed persons, teachers and others, for literacy training among adults. (Zeitlin, 1958) The education of illiterate persons was a top priority from the beginning, with projects for the physically handicapped, those needing vocational training, and a program for general adult education following. A program providing nursery school education for children from needy or neglected homes was introduced in October of 1933, when it became obvious that child care was needed to allow many adults to continue their education (Jones, 1935).

Federal regulations about these grants required the enlistment of local cooperation and a partial matching of funds through in kind contributions whenever possible. In the case of education programs, in kind contributions usually meant the local or state authorities had to provide a location for the classes, materials, and cooperation in supervising the programs. With the Emergency Education Program providing about 75% of the total funding, the financial burden on the states and communities was not heavy, but it did exist (Zeitlin, 1958, p. 127). This financial obligation, together with the initial direction of monies to both the state governor and FERA administrator, was to become a source of serious conflict in Oklahoma.

Although the emergency education programs tried to avoid duplication of local education efforts, and prohibited the replacement of public school teachers with federally funded workers, some conflict with local officials was inevitable. One of the reasons that the federal government targeted adult education so aggressively was to avoid this battle. In 1932 only 18 states, Oklahoma not among them, contributed to the support of adult education in their communities (Zeitlin, 1958, p. 128). This allowed the federal government to step in and begin a program where often nothing of the kind had been done before, hence bypassing local education authorities.

Opposition came from a variety of sources. Many educational officials felt that the federal government had no place entering the field of local education, an area of traditional community and state control. Others were distressed that education was being used as a tool of the relief efforts. They felt that the requirement to hire persons off the relief rolls, even when hiring was limited to non-certified, yet degreed teachers, undermined educational quality. Those on relief were often believed to be in such a condition due to poor performance or potential. Hiring these individuals was felt to undermine market forces that encouraged employed teachers to work hard for modest pay. If opportunities became available within a federal government program, wages of all teachers could have been forced up. In reality, relief teachers wages were set by the state, and they varied from county to county (Norris, G., personal communication, January 14, 1936). They were usually paid much less than regular teachers and rarely looked at the job as anything but temporary (Educational Work Relief for Jobless Teachers, 1933, p. 811). The fact that they were hired off the relief rolls usually assumed a state of economic desperation. It was unlikely that employed teachers would pursue relief to obtain federal employment. At the time relief rolls were usually compiled at the local level after a physical assessment of the individual's situation. Those individuals of means were excluded.

Governor Murray was at the height of his power in the early 1930's and had run against Franklin Roosevelt in several of the 1932 presidential primaries. It was a bitter race, colored by Murray's suggestion that Roosevelt's paralysis was the result of syphilis (Murray, 1932). Murray was humiliated at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago of 1932 when during a roll call for votes, only the Oklahoma delegates and one delegate from North Dakota voted for him despite his whirlwind populist speaking tour through the northeastern United States (Bilger, 1983).

Murray was sympathetic to the plight of the unemployed and the hardships caused by the depression. He launched several efforts within the state in response to the economic crisis. He reallocated taxes to relief efforts, regularly released unemployed men held in jails as vagrants, and declared martial law in eleven counties stopping the tax sales of farms and homes. Of course, this did nothing to help the revenue problems on the local level, and often just made the educational crisis worse when schools were unable to pay teachers due to the inability to collect property taxes. Property tax collections in 1933 dropped $30 million statewide, and oil revenues collapsed with falling oil prices. Farm income, already reeling from a 64% decline at the beginning of the decade, continued to be poor for most of the decade (Lambert, 1983). Drought, dust storms, and low agricultural prices made the citizens of Oklahoma and those who depended upon their tax revenues poorer than ever before.

Faced with the economic crisis within the state together with his animosity toward Roosevelt, Murray was not going to be the most helpful governor in the country when cooperating with the new FERA. Still, reports of Murray's treatment of federal officials remain among the most notorious of the period. When Aubrey Williams, FERA liaison officer to Oklahoma City went to see the governor about the program, Murray met him without shoes and offered him a cup of tea strained through his filthy handkerchief. Murray then launched into a profanity ridden discourse of insults toward Roosevelt. Williams walked out of the meeting and reported back to Washington that he had found..."thieving and favoritism on all sides. I found that every Tom, Dick and Harry in the state was getting relief whether they were unemployed or not" (Patterson, 1969, p. 54). As a result of reports of this type, the FERA program in Oklahoma was federalized in February of 1934, a distinction only shared by Louisiana during this period.

Until federalization, and even to a limited extent afterwards, the governor's influence was a constant problem in a variety of areas. The governor had direct political control of the Relief Administration, the Vocational Education Department and the State Board of Education. As a result, his influence was constantly felt, despite attempts from Washington to limit local political meddling in the program (John Vaughan, personal communication, Oct. 23, 1933).

The governor felt that hiring of persons under the various programs should be controlled by the executive branch of state government. In addition, the governor believed that the primary expenditure of these federal funds should be for the support of rural schools in difficulty due to the depression. In the funding proposal submitted by the governor's office in November of 1933, $2,250,000 was budgeted for rural education, and only $36,500 was budgeted for funding all other adult education programs. In addition, all monies were to be dispersed under the State Board of Education, an entity controlled by the governor (Minutes of the State Board of Education, Nov. 27, 1933). This was an attempt by the governor's office to bring in funds to underwrite the local schools, while keeping the funds completely under his political control. This was not the purpose of the program. In response to the governor's proposal, C. M. Bookman from the FERA office in Washington, D.C. wrote:

> Since the purpose of the emergency relief funds is to provide relief, it is out of the question for the relief organization to attempt to underwrite the entire school program within a state . . . The amount of money you are requesting is far in excess of any possible allotment to Oklahoma for this purpose (even) if your plan is drawn up in harmony with the officially prescribed line of organization and administration (personal communication, Dec. 1, 1933).

Under FERA regulations, educational funds were to be under the control of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, a separately elected official in Oklahoma. This put them out of control of the governor, and resulted in a prolonged battle between Governor Murray, and John Vaughan, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, who was attempting to implement the federal FERA legislation. In a letter to Harry Hopkins, Vaughan wrote:

> I regret exceedingly that it is necessary that I register a complaint with you regarding this matter. However, knowing the political turmoil that has existed in the emergency relief program in Oklahoma, and the threats that are now being made regarding the educational relief program, (it appears) that we will have a political organization without real educational relief, neither will we have unemployment relief (personal communication, November 28, 1933).

Political hiring and firing of teachers of all levels was a problem during the entire period. As state workers, they could be terminated by the governor or other politicians of the time. Tenure was not generally recognized and numerous reports of abrupt employment termination exist.

> I have been a teacher all my life . . . recently through the political machinations of the minions of our Gov. Murray, I was dropped as head of the department of social sciences in one of our state colleges, where I had been for many years. . . (Deford, C., personal communication, August 8, 1934).

Terminations were, of course, frequently carried out for cause, or for financial reasons. Still, the difficulty of the times, and the degree of uncertainty about employment, even for those who were well established in an institution is significant. This contributed to the overall public popularity of a federal program that could step in and provide employment for those had been displaced through no fault of their own. This led to public support for a much higher degree of federal intervention in education and employment in general than was ever the case before the New Deal programs.

By early in 1934, the FERA had proposed a program in Oklahoma in cooperation with the State Board of Education, bypassing the governor's office. This evoked a strong reaction of hostility between the governor's office, and John Vaughan, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Murray, in his speeches and letters, repeatedly attacked Vaughan and "his little group of North Central Associationists" (Murray, 1934). Although the governor and his representatives continued to oppose the plan as a usurping of state power, there was little they could do to stop the program. There were continuing problems, such as the governor refusing to sign documents brought to him by the education officials, even after committing to carefully negotiated compromises. In a letter to John Vaughan, Governor Murray's secretary wrote:

> Inasmuch as your written agreement with Governor Murray, approved by Mr. Aubrey Williams, expressly stipulates that you are to have entire control of the Emergency Education Relief and that Governor Murray shall have nothing whatever to do with it, he must needs decline himself to apply for this fund (sic) (Weaver, C., personal communication, January 19, 1934).

However, after January of 1934, it was the federal government who controlled the program in the state.

The purposes of the adult education program from the perspective of the federal government were primarily to improve the lives of those on relief and to employ unemployed teachers, a technical rational approach to the problems of the times. These purposes were perfectly aligned with the deepest desires of Governor Murray. Yet, his domineering personality (Bilger, 1983) and his desire to control appropriations and appointments aroused resistance and antagonisms both among certain constituencies in Oklahoma and in Washington. This resulted in a poor state and federal relationship. What program planners need to understand from this historical example is the importance of establishing working partnerships with funding agencies in an environment of unequal power. In this example, the state of Oklahoma, an essential partner, lost all control because of an unwillingness to successfully negotiate power and influence with a federal agency.

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# The Impact of the Internet on Research-to-Practice in Adult, Continuing, Extension, and Community Education

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*This paper explores possible effects of the Internet on Adult Learning. The purpose of this paper is to raise awareness of three practitioner concerns associated with Internet learning: the preparation of adults for this new learning, the avoidance of frustration when failure is encountered, and the need for a new research-to-practice model. The practitioner concerns grew out of reflective learning and work related observations. This paper presents arguments for adult learning theories and techniques and raises awareness of important issues.*

## Description Of The Concern

Adult learners are provided with a plethora of information at their fingertips through the Internet. However, the accessibility, volume, and speed of information and the practice of "surfing the net" raise a practitioner concern over the user's ability to meet learning needs. Because on-line adults can get the information they need at the time they need it and in the way they need it, the Internet would seem to be one of the ultimate learning tools. However, until adults learn how to learn, the "link to the world" may merely be an information box, not a tool for learning.

The importance of the concern to both research and practice is threefold: 1) many adults' educational background has left them ill-equipped to be lifelong learners; 2) failure to learn on the Internet may lead to frustration, anger, and a fear of trying again; and 3) communication technology is expanding so rapidly that adult education research is not able to keep pace with Internet learning practice. The dominant static linear model, "from research comes practice," must be changed to reflect the current reality that the opposite is*also* true, resulting in a new dynamic, three-dimensional model illustrating a blending of the two.

## Importance Of The Concern To Both Research And Practice

### The growth of the Internet.

"The Internet is one of the fastest growing commercial phenomena ever witnessed by society" and is "growing 10% per month, doubling in size nearly every 10 months" (Standard and Poor's, 1998, p. 5). *Standard and Poor's* states the number of adults using the Internet in the U.S. rose from 35 million in 1996 to 58 million in 1997. It predicts that by the year 2002, the number of Internet users will triple to approximately 150 million. A more recent citing from the web by CommerceNet and Nielsen Media Research (June 17, 1999) indicates that Internet use in North America already reached 92 million in April of 1999.

"Not only is there considerably more information than ever before, but links with technology have made its storage, transmission, and access more feasible than ever before" (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999, p. 15). The Internet is causing an increase in personal computer (PC) sales and creating a revolution in the way computers are being used in organizations and households. The *U.S. Industry & Trade Outlook '98* predicts that by the year 2002, annual shipments of PCs will exceed 70 percent of the total base number of 1996 units in the United States. In addition, "by this time, computer use in the United States should be substantially more pervasive, especially in homes and educational institutions, and will impact more human activities" (p.27-11).

These statistics reflect the size and growth of the Internet. The Internet is probably the "other means yet to be discovered" referred to by Knowles in his 1986 statement, "By the end of this century most educational services will be delivered electronically by teleconferencing, cable and satellite television, computer networks and other means yet to be discovered" (cited in Lewis, 1989, p. 621).

### Adult Learning and the Internet.

To understand the relationship of the Internet to adult learning principles, it is necessary to look in greater depth at the literature associated with the adult learning process. Various assumptions, models, or theories exist in the field of adult learning. Knowles' assumptions focus on the learner and emphasize techniques that facilitate learner participation, thus making the process learner-centered. Lindeman, Shön, and others emphasized the importance of reflection in the context of the learning experience. In their chapter on "Integrating Theory and Practice," Merriam and Caffarella (1999) utilize the categories of (1) learner, (2) context, and (3) learning process to distinguish adult learning and explain how the adult learner is unique.

As previously mentioned, Knowles' work with Andragogy focused on the learner. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) point out that the learner's*experience* is the assumption differentiating the adult learner from the younger learner that seems to be common in most of the literature. The other assumption that makes the adult learner unique is associated with the *motivation to learn*. The adult is motivated by life situations, such as job changes, relationship roles and changes, and social responsibilities; a younger person is still taking in new information to build a repertoire of knowledge to be used as an adult. The adult's motivation may come from internal factors or may be motivated from these contextual situations.

In the context of learning, Merriam and Caffarella (1999) look at "the interactive dimension," which involves "the individual interacting with the context," and includes "theories of situated cognition, reflective practice, and cognitive development" (p. 393). A discussion of "the structural dimension," includes factors like "race, class, gender, cultural diversity, and power and oppression" (p. 393). These contextual factors provide the adult learner with the motivation to learn and the context for immediate application of the learning.

In the last category, "the learning process," Merriam and Caffarella (1999) look at speed, or "the time a person has to examine a problem or respond to a situation" (p. 397) and the meaningfulness of the learning. The availability of the Internet accommodates the variability in learning speeds. It is like a library that never closes, and thus there are no limits on time. Since real life situations usually motivate an adult's learning, meaningfulness of the learning is usually apparent.

Unique features of Internet learning relate to the categories differentiating the adult learner:

1. Learner - The Internet's flexibility allows the learner to navigate through information via multiple avenues, thus adapting to the learner's previous experience or knowledge base. Unlike any other resource, the Internet is immediately available whenever the learner has a situation that motivates the need to learn.

2. Context - In the *first dimension* of the contextual perspective, "the interactive dimension," there are considerable opportunities to utilize various aspects of *reflection-on-action*, *reflection-in-action*, and situated cognition in the form of cognitive apprenticeships. This is an area where practitioners may have considerable opportunity for improvement in Internet learning. In the *second dimension*, "the structural dimension," the Internet is providing access to cultures and diversity like never before. The Internet is the first learning tool that does not have geographical or cultural boundaries.
3. Learning Process - The nature of Internet learning fosters the adult *learning process* by providing a self-paced tool that accommodates the user's preferred speed of information processing to achieve desired outcomes.

Adults surfing the Net.

*Surfing the Net* is fun and adventurous and can feel like a treasure hunt jumping from one link to another in pursuit of an interest, information, knowledge, entertainment, etc. But there is concern that many adults are not getting their learning objectives met through this practice. John Field (1997) in a chapter of the book, *Electronic Pathways* compares surfing the net with remote control channel surfing on the television. He refers to research that found less than 25% of American viewers watching a program without interruption to the end. More viewers actually switched to another program partway through and most had conversations throughout the show that were unrelated to the show (p. 35). Many American families leave the television on in the background and only 'tune in' once in awhile when something of interest comes on. If adults are accustomed to passive shallow learning from television, they may view computer learning in the same way. The concern over net surfing is related to the probability that many adults are engaging in passive learning with a tool that requires active participation and interaction to accomplish objectives.

Classroom without a teacher.

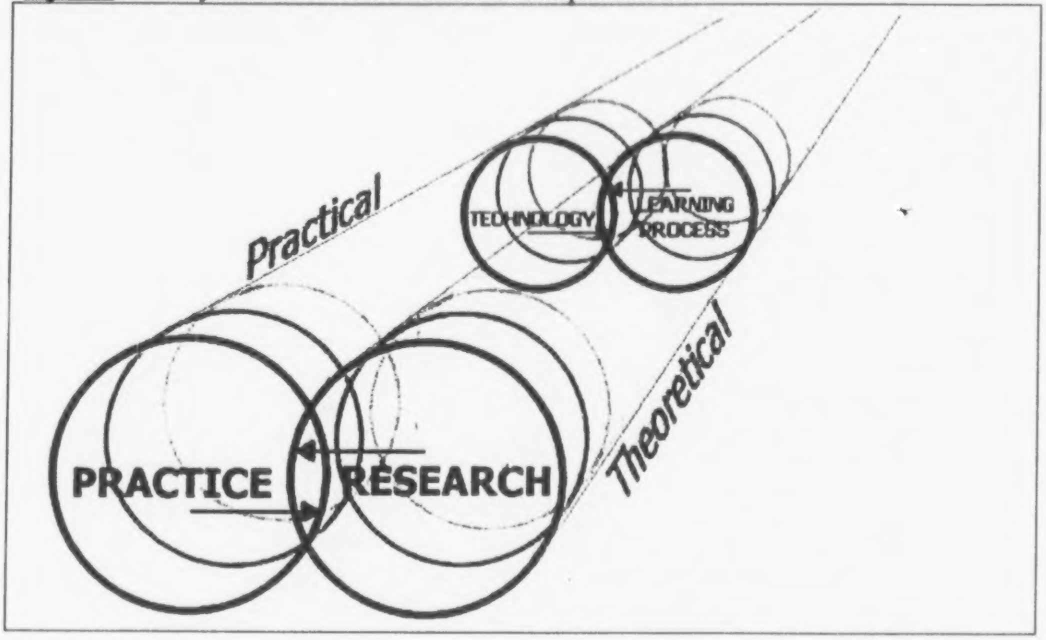
Many adults have never learned how to learn because they experienced a traditional childhood education as a passive learner, thought of as a vessel to be filled with knowledge. The Internet offers vast learning opportunities for those adults who are not bound by a traditional classroom-learning mentality. A past education that has been void of participatory, self-directed learning may leave adult Internet users feeling like they are in a classroom without a teacher, or in a library without a librarian. Getting lost in a maze of links can cause frustration and anger leading to fear of returning. It seems that fear of technology is related more to generation than age. Field (1996) refers to the emergence of the *infant king* describing how many adults seek computer help from their children, who are more knowledgeable and skilled than their parents--and often their teachers as well. Children are turning to peers for their source of new Internet information. Internet users who have learned how to learn through adult learning methodology may have an advantage over those who have experienced only traditional teaching methods.

## Various Approaches That AttemptTo Deal With The Concern

### A new model for researchers and practitioners.

One concern is that the traditional linear model, Research to Practice, (a deductive approach where premises lead to conclusions) implies that practice arises from research. In reality Practice to Research (an inductive approach where conclusions lead to premises) also occurs. The phenomenon of research falling behind practice is not a new discussion topic in the profession. As recently as the 1998 Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference, a panel discussion addressed the importance of thinking in terms of a model that reflects the reciprocal or "back and forth" relationship between research and practice. In his paper for the 1987 Research-to-Practice Conference, John Henschke,EdD, University of Missouri-St. Louis, identified a number of literature sources that looked to practice as an important resource for research. Henschke (1987) states that "the most pronounced illustration, however, of the need for research growing out of practice comes from Shön" (p. 3). Shön's idea of reflection-in-action is better understood by his 1983 statement, "When someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context" (p. 68). Building theory, according to Kenny and Harnischin 1982, is not an either/or approach, but instead, a blending of deductive and inductive approaches called *action research* described as researching what you are doing while you are doing it for the purpose of solving a problem (cited in Deshler and Hagan 1989, p. 152). Perhaps the new*action research* model (see Figure 1.) that reflects the blending of research and practice better reflects today's practitioner's research concerns.

Figure 1. New dynamic three-dimensional research/practice model.



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This new three-dimensional research/practice model is an attempt to depict the dynamic nature and the complexity of the issue.

1. All words are placed in circles to reflect no beginning or end. *Practice and research* are perpetual, as are *learning process and technology*, and *other concepts* that may apply to adult education in the future that are yet unknown.
2. The overlapping or blending of the circles represent the *back and forth* relationship of the concepts in the circles.
3. The two largest circles show an order reversal by putting *practice* in the left circle. This demonstrates that practice is ahead of research. The second set of blended circles (technology to learning process) is placed directly behind to show a blending of sets as well. Just as practice is ahead of research, technology is ahead of the adult learning process. The *theoretical*, research and the learning process, overlap with the *practical*, practice and technology. From an adult learning perspective, the overlap of the practical and theoretical align with the interactive dimension of the contextual perspective. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) support the model by indicating that future research design in adult learning be accomplished collaboratively with the learner.
4. The pairs of circles disappearing into infinity depict a research/practice model that is future oriented and protected from obsolescence. Future practitioners of adult education will fill in related concepts for their own time.

In summary, this model depicts the interchange of practice and research that is necessary in dealing with the technologies of today and in the next millennium.

### Learning how to learn.

Because Internet technology provides a means of communication and the sharing and storing of knowledge like never before, adults are faced with a growing need to learn how to learn outside the context of formal schooling. In the 1998 report to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, a demand for the new millennium is stated, "Education must transmit, efficiently and on a massive scale, an increasing amount of constantly evolving knowledge and know-how adapted to a knowledge-driven civilization, because this forms the basis of the skills of the future" (Delors, 1998, p. 85). Adult education must strive to simultaneously provide the needed flow of information, make sure adults are not overwhelmed by it, and provide the tools for them to navigate through it to meet learning needs.

Education for the next century has been organized according to fundamental types of learning called the four pillars of education: *learning to know*, described as the skill of understanding; *learning to do*, that gives an individual competency to act; *learning to be* achieving a state of whole self in mind, body, and spirit; and *learning to live together*, or the ability to resolve conflict (Delors, 1998). Learning to learn encompasses the first two pillars and is the task of education practitioners. If an individual has been successful at learning to know and learning to do, the last two pillars usually follow.

Learning to learn requires the ability to concentrate, think, and memorize (Delors, 1998). These skills may not be well developed in today's society of information surfers. Information *bytes* are obtained from radio, television, newspapers, and now the Internet. Delors (1998) suggests that information surfing is "harmful to the process of discovery, which takes time and involves going more deeply into the message received" (p.87). The good news is that one can learn the skill of concentration through such activities as games, training exercises, experiential learning. Thinking skill requires an allotment of time and talent for blending what is known with what is unknown to end up with a logical thought. This, too, can be developed with directed practice. Memory is becoming obsolete in today's world of b*uilt-in* memory. The coffee pot remembers to start brewing before you wake up in the morning, the iron automatically shuts off after you leave in case you forget, and it seems like everyone wears a nametag. Because information is so easily accessible all the time, memory must purposefully be developed. Memorization remains an important developmental skill because it is essential to the process of learning by association.

Learning by association is key to Internet learning because you must remember where you have been to know where you are going and then, how to get back! To learn by association means building on what has already been learned to direct what is yet to be learned. The ability to learn is essential for Internet users to successfully meet their learning objectives. Knowing that the learning skills of concentration, thought, and memorization can be built through adult learning methodology emphasizes the added importance of adult education in the next century.

## Conclusion

This paper has looked at three practitioner concerns associated with the effects of the Internet on Adult, Continuing, Extension, and Community Education. The concern for the adults' preparedness in using the technology as an effective learning tool is actually a testimonial for Adult Learning concepts like self-directed and reflective learning. The concern for the adult's ability to utilize the Internet as an effective learning tool and the avoidance of frustration and anger due to failed attempts with the technology can be best addressed by learning-to-learn concepts. Adults who better understand how they learn are more likely to be successful in their attempts and less likely to look on failed attempts as situations that cause anger and frustration. The new model presents a research-to-practice philosophy that is necessitated by the available technologies of today. The technology provides access to information like never before and is forcing the need for a new research/practice model that guides 21st century practitioners involved in Internet learning. The purpose of this paper was not to provide answers, but to raise questions and issues that are immediately pertinent to educators of adults. The ultimate question is: *As researchers and practitioners in Adult, Continuing, Extension, and Community Education, can we keep up?*

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# Dance to Learn: Reaffirmation of Cultural Rituals in Instructing Adult Learners in Formal Settings

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*Dance involves several elements. Individually, these elements seem to have no appeal; however, together, they offer a memorable experience. For instance, a dance is comprised of a lead, a partner, selected music, and pre-defined movement-rules that respond to the music. Similarly, in adult learning, there is an instructor, a student, a pre-selected lesson, and pre-defined instruction. Independently, each of the elements is meaningless in the context in which they are situated. Together, the elements create a notable and lasting memory.*

This presentation conceptually considers learning, as with dance, to be an event where the adult learner must first associate with the new knowledge and then experience it. Metaphorically, "dance" represents the culturally-sensitive mechanism by which the learner perceives and acculturates to the dissemination of significant information, and his or her distinctive 'learning' environment. In other words, a learner must be fully comfortable with the facts before the learner retains the information for later use. Our beliefs, on this two-step "dance for learning," are derived from our extensive literary reviews and personal experiences. The following deductions will help sustain this calculated approach.

Adult Learning assumptions postulate that adult learners acquire knowledge best through self-directed learning. Knowles, Hough, and Tough are among many who similarly concur on the autonomic needs of the adult learner. Our team proposes a question: *"For what reason does the adult learner prefer to self-direct?"* Research indicates that the answer is in the individual learner's inherent ability to know best how to receive new information. This first learning factor is termed the "familiarity-factor relationship."

An example of the familiarity-factor relationship is reported by DeGangi and Porges (1990) in their *American Occupational Therapy Association* article, entitled "Neuroscience Foundations of Human Performance." In this article the two neurologists explain the phenomenon, "attention getting," as a critical prerequisite to the learning process. In "attention getting," DeGangi and Porges contend that in order for information to be learned, adult learners must realize a relationship between the offered knowledge and the knowledge previously embedded in the learner's life. If this relationship is not realized, then the two neurocognitists believe that the types of stimuli that motivate a learner to respond will not manifest.

Benjamin Bloom and David Krathwohl, along with a cadre of other educational leaders, also support this notion of a *critical first step of learning*. This team of educators categorizes levels of acquiring the new knowledge, by placing the acquisition on a *dependency*. This entails simultaneously acquiring a parallel progression in affective development. Bloom states that after the introduction of knowledge, an adult learner may be asked to respond to the new knowledge

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even though the learner does not yet value it. These educators suggest that the value of the new knowledge can come only after the new knowledge is "translated" and "interpreted" into familiar terms that are recognizable by the student.

Other literature also supports the notion that a learner must first associate the unexplored with the pre-existing before the new knowledge is retained. For instance, Professor Hirotaka Takeuchi, at Harvard's business school, and co-author of *The Knowledge Creating Company: How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation*, explains that "the Japanese realized that as their companies became more global, they could benefit from converting information for their tacit conventions to explicit forms so that people unfamiliar with their culture could understand [their technical processes]" (*Training and Development*, December 1998, "Some Explicit Thoughts," p. 24). Thus, a relationship between old knowledge and new knowledge must be established if the learner is to proceed in a "dance" to learn.

An interesting side note to our study has been the discovery of the cultural individuality of the "dance" or self-directed learning processes that went beyond the familiar-association concept involved in acquiring new knowledge. If we further conceptualize the dance as having "the lead" (a knowledge-giver) and a "partner" (a knowledge-receiver or learner), we may also consider a number of research studies that indicate that adults in self-directing (or leading) their own learning processes do not always follow predictable dance or learning steps. Speer and Mocker, 1984; Danis and Ternablay, 1987, 1988; Spear, 1988; and Berger, 1990, for instance, report that adults differ in deciding when, where, and how their respective learning events should take place. It should be noted, however, that all have found commonality in adults seeking location and methodologies that are familiar and comfortable to them. Thus, while association with previous experiences and or references is strategically critical to learning, the means by which that relationship is formed appears to be more individualized.

A second interesting side note of our early research is that the "familiar" factor or prior knowledge association is related directly to the ability to gain and sustain "expertise" in adult learning areas. For instance, Chi, Glaser, and Farr report in their respective studies, that the difference between novice and expert adult learners is the way knowledge is organized. In other words, the knowledge of experts includes knowledge about the application of *what they know*, whereas the knowledge of novices is specific to a presented, more formalized academic problem (S. Merriam and R. Caffarella, *Learning In Adulthood*, p.175). Translated, these findings suggest that one acquires more in-depth knowledge and retains it for longer periods of time, if the new knowledge relates, again, to the learner's familiar setting or circumstance. Perhaps that is why personal examples, parables, metaphors, and concepts work so well as mental models for new knowledge. As John Dewey stated, "no one can think about anything without experience and information about it" (Ibid., p. 173). Moreover, Dr. Raymond Cattell, in his "Crystallized Intelligence" theory states that a person's accumulated cultural intelligence is a filtering system for all other knowledge. Thus, a learner potentially becomes "expert" in the new knowledge only if and, perhaps, only because a familiar association is established with the new learning.

Both side notes underscore the idea that before a learner can take the second step in the dance to learn, she must first relate to new knowledge -- that is, to the beat of the music!

But there is a second primary step that concludes the learning dance. This second step to learning requires the adult learner to be fully immersed into the knowledge experience.

Howard Gardner, (*Frames of Mind*, 1983), describes human intelligence as a pluralized means to understanding the world around us. According to Gardner, it is clear that humans learn, not only through the neurological changes that occur within the brain during the learning process, but also through observing variations of mental outputs a learner can elicit. In short, whether it is through musical performance, interpersonal relationships, test scores or spatial relationships, learners understand and, hence, relate to their environment in at least eight different ways. Following a cross-disciplinary review of research, our contention is that one must first associate with the familiar and then fully act on the relationship of the new with the old. This must be accomplished through a comfortable means of expression, as suggested through Gardner's *Intelligence Model.*

Our position is based on the fact that learners neurologically internalize (mentally receive and store) all information gained through the senses. Some of this information cannot be expressed, as there are no environmentally available or biologically accessible means of doing so. Thus, the internalized information becomes "tacit," by default, rather than by intention. In order to increase retention of the new knowledge, an adult learner must somehow connect the internal (tacit) knowledge with the traditionally expressed (explicit) use of it to fully engage all familiar references. This concept of transferring internal and external expressions of knowledge is not easily transferred to external expression (B. Durrance, 1998, p.24-29). Peter Senge, chairman of the Society for Organizational Learning at M.I.T., states the following: "Embodied knowledge is embodied knowledge," yet other research indicates that with reflection or careful observation, patterns of tacit knowledge can be experienced, expressed, and described."

Similarly, Albert Bandura, through his "self-efficacy" model, contends that people try to control events that affect their lives, and that people's level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true. A person's self efficacy, then, can facilitate the new knowledge's positive impact in the relationship between familiar knowledge and desired knowledge. Thus, a desired relationship is promoted between the two sets of knowledge.

As another side-note, we did not investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and explicit knowledge, as displayed by Gardner's identified intelligences. We suspect that here, too, there is a relationship that supports an adult learner's dance steps. Take, for example, the intelligences as displayed through tacit, kinesthetic, intra- and inter-personal learning processes. One might research how a learner would achieve a positive outcome through any of these selected learning methodologies. If one follows the logic offered in our discussions above-- where tacit knowledge is revealed through self-efficacy – then certainly that knowledge revelation must be understood and subsequently exhibited through one of Gardner's identified mental models. Experiential learning is the impetus for our tacit learning; it is embedded in our culture. In contrast to traditional instruction, whole-body learning enables the adult learner to better control the learning event, hence gaining more motivation and persistent execution of the learned concept or skill.

In order to best exemplify the "dance to learn" concept as a culturally-sensitive method that compounds a self-directed procedure along with an implied perception in its internal weave, the authors would like to present, in this submission, an overview of three distinguishable scenarios that will be further discussed at the conference.

### SCENARIO 1:

***Dance to learn:*** *In a rural community in India.*

The International Resources for Fairer Trade (IRFT), located in Mumbai, India, is a 'not-for-profit' organization (NGO) committed to community-based small enterprises.' The objective of the IRFT is to enhance and sustain the participation of these enterprises in local and international business. As a result, IRFT has developed services which address the specific concerns and needs of 'buyers' and 'producers.' Worker training, workshops, and in-depth consulting services are provided in association with Indian and International specialists. The emphasis of IRFT's work is on textiles clothing and agro-products.

Recently, the IRFT has expressed great concern regarding two specific problem areas: trainee absenteeism, and poor quality of work. These two areas of concern (performance-based issues) have been identified as the result of a recent needs assessment developed by an international development consultant retained by the organization.

Components specifically relate to the indigenous needs of a rural community. The community described here is Third World, yet this prescriptive approach could be applied to any rural environment with an illiterate population. The performance-based issues -- which were identified as the result of an intensive needs assessment performed earlier in the year on the same group of female workers -- are training, absenteeism and poor quality of work.

It appears that there are several reasons as to why these issues reoccur. The population involved in this training program consists of Dalit (lower caste) females who are training in the area of textiles, and learning to manage their own micro-enterprises. This training requires learning how to weave, dye, and stitch. Once these skills are mastered, the participant is then guided through the administrative functions necessary to manage a business. This is a difficult task, as many of these women are functionally illiterate. Learning through association might ease this process.

When dealing with a third world culture, specifically the Indian culture, it is important to consider traditions, ethics and religious beliefs in order to truly understand the people individually, within their communities, and within society as a whole. The majority of the women involved in this program are from the same village and are related to each other in one way or another. There are certain events and traditions, during the various seasons, that require the attendance and participation of most of these women.

The women are being trained for the purpose of establishing their own small enterprises. Their expertise will eventually satisfy the commitments made by the IRFT to producers and buyers within the community and state-wide, and will also provide a sustainable means of income for these women and their families. Whatever they learn via the training program will become a transfer of learning to others they employ for their own small enterprises.

The motivational level spirals downward, as the women see themselves not achieving the goals initially established. They do not always recognize why this inconsistency exists, as responding to the cultural requirements of their society and religion is a way of life. Transcending cultural barriers is difficult when there are numerous traditions and considerations of which to adhere. The Indian female has always played a subservient role within the household. Only within the past decade has she been acknowledged for her intelligence, organization, trustworthiness, and good sense. Many of the banking/lending institutions are willing to lend women money, as opposed to men, to 'start-up' micro-businesses. An important issue that is being addressed through this training program is the concept of empowerment, a precept that is a contradiction to the long-standing traditional notions held by the Indian populace. Training programs, such as the one noted above, can assist the women of India in terms of understanding their worth and potential.

The Indian culture can be considered an overt culture, whereas the behavioral patterns that have been established can not only be identified, but can also be studied. According to Hall, this type of manifestation is easily understood. He claims that "every culture has its unique, deep-rooted dimensions that become entrenched in the human brain (Hall, 1977). In order to break through these traditional patterns and unconscious cultural encounters, a clear and explicit verbal expression is needed, an approach that would weaken the traditional doctrines that impede the possibility of certain growth through understanding. This population can learn through dance. These graceful women can overcome the first step, as they bound their way through the learning process that will ensure the success of learning, and the continued transfer of information to other dancers.

## SCENARIO 2:

***Dance to learn**: In a rural community in Appalachia.*

I was 22, and freshly graduated from the University of Georgia. I had already taught in a work-study program for two years in Atlanta's inner city, through a program called "Teacher Corp." I had also interned in an exclusive, private school in the suburbs. Despite my early experience, and the fact that I had completed my university academic requirements, I felt grossly inadequate in terms of fully understanding and applying my knowledge and skills. I applied, and was accepted, to "baby-sit" 19 children in a rural, North Georgia Mountain region of Ellijay. While the children varied in ages from 7-14, they had one common denominator: they were awaiting an assignment to a class that could accommodate the special needs of retarded children. None of these children could read, write, add, subtract, or verbalize themselves adequately. They were all assigned to a single room, behind a larger building. There were no books or supplies of any sort--only an insecure, graduate from UGA.

I was assigned to a mountain woman who had only an eighth grade education. She was largely lazy, but had an intimate knowledge of the mountains, as she had grown up in the region herself. After watching me struggle with the children for one month, she told me that I would never reach the children, unless I went and "put my knees under the table with them." An old Indian ("Joe") subsequently took me up to the mountains to meet these kids on their own turf. I forded creeks, climbed up rocks, and often maneuvered through thick brushes. Some lived in loosely-made tree houses; others, in lean-tos. Only two of the 19 lived in a house, as we know it. I was called "Teacher," rather than Ms. Kassinger and was often handed deer meat as a token of hospitality.

I came back renewed. Ideas blossomed--none based on supplies or money. The budget was nonexistent. We bartered, negotiated, and exchanged information about our own experiences and knowledge. Ultimately, when the Federal Authorities came to retest the kids for the next school year placement, only one scored below 5th grade math and, none scored below a third grade reading level.

This experience created a deep impression on me, and was the underlying story behind this paper. Education is not built from external resources, but from internal ones...the ones that make the student dance!

As in all cultural learning, there are familiar symbols, mores, and language that effectively communicate ideas between the indigenous residents. Some of the Appalachian region, where I had taught, included: "Teacher" (vs. Ms. Kassinger); "whippin" (for discipline); "put your knees under the table" (get to know someone); and the idea that life is measured in seasons, not years. However, the Appalachian communication form, once solely identified with the geographical area, is now not as commonly or readily expressed in the region. The purpose of the region has been redefined from remote poverty to city-resort. Subsequently, so has the language of the region. This transformation calls for re-identification of educational communication. In the region where I taught, Atlantans now claim it as a "beautiful, retirement or resort area." Thirty years ago it was a blink-of-the-eye, "pass-through" village to other similarly small mountain towns.

While one's roots anchor understanding, they provide only a baseline--but never a barrier. What I found, for instance, in my Appalachian school experience, was that the kids sought means to increase their pride and if learning more would allow them to do this, then they supported it. One example that comes to mind is the bartering system that I set up with my students: they taught me something in exchange for me teaching them something. I learned how to hunt deer, buck dance, and make certain types of apple pies; they learned to read, write, and add.

## SCENARIO 3:

### *Dance to Learn: In a Rural Community of Southside Virginia*

What happens when a population of children is removed from formal learning systems early in the educational process? And how does such educational deprivation affect the learning processes of those children as they mature into adulthood? These are questions pondered by this researcher studying the effects of early educational deprivation upon the learning habits and styles of adult learners in a rural community of Southside, Virginia.

Having been forced out of the public school system for a period of five years during the late 1950s and early 1960s, many of these adults report serious scarring to their learning processes, even forty years later. In other words, they continue to misstep with their dancing partners and quite often find themselves stepping solo in their struggle for life-long learning. As a result, they report that due to basic instructional gaps during their formative years, much of their learning has been haphazard, taking place outside of formal settings. Thus, they rely heavily on instinct, common sense and tacit knowledge on a day to day basis, although rarely feeling confident to publicly exhibit the knowledge they possess.

As previously stated, the information that learners neurologically internalize becomes "tacit" by default and must somehow be subsumed by any new or higher level knowledge if learning is to take place. Consider the Advance Organizer Cognitive learning model of David

Ausubel (1963), for instance. This theorist contends that advance organizing provides students with a cognitive structure for comprehending material presented through lectures, readings and other media. Having become one of the most studied in the information processing-family, advance organizing can be employed with almost every conceivable content and with learners of every age. In addition, it easily can be combined with other models, especially when presentations are mixed with inductive activity.

Let us consider how Ausubel's model of instruction might be applicable to this rural community's daily dance. Ausubel developed his model of instruction based on the way knowledge is organized within one's memory - in hierarchical fashion. According to him, the more general, inclusive, and abstract content subsumes or assimilates newer, more specific and concrete knowledge. In other words, previously acquired, more general and abstract dance steps can facilitate acquisition of new more complex arrangements. It is important to note, however, that the more firmly anchored and differentiated these subsuming structures are, the more useful they become.

More importantly, the learning dance must be meaningful and relevant to what is to follow. The dance instructor's steps must be clearly delivered in order to engage the learner in a well-maneuvered composition. Otherwise, the dancer may trip or fall flat on her face. Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning is conceived with the learner's cognitive structure and keeps these three assumptions in the dance routine: the learner's knowledge of a particular subject matter is dependent upon how well organized, clear, and stable it is; when cognitive structure is defective, learning suffers; when structure is effective, learning is enhanced, because new knowledge can be meaningfully integrated into, or subsumed by, given cognitive structure.

However, what if the learner perceives his cognitive structure to be deficient -- a stigma he has carried with him for forty years? And what if she -- out of sheer doubt of her abilities -- is embarrassed to perform her dance routine on a public stage? Then perhaps the first step may be to build confidence in the ability to execute the dance routine. As is commonly acknowledged in andragogical studies, the adult learner needs to recognize the applicability and benefit associated with learning episodes. Will the learner glide across the dance floor "graceful as a swan," or bobble up and down like the proverbial "ugly duckling"? When all is said and done, will the performance culminate in applause or mockery?

In addition, how might the dance instructor facilitate the belief that bobbling might not be so terrible after all - that it is the first step in keeping one's head above water or one's backside off the floor? And, perhaps that is what these learners have been doing successfully for forty years. Their learning dance may not have been as graceful as what they desired. But, it certainly has been practical and functional. These learners have remained on the dance floor and have learned their steps by whatever means possible. More importantly, they never have fallen and not been able to get right back up.

*Association is a critical component of learning and helps to create a lasting and impressive experience for the learner. Moreover, because the association-experience approach uses familiarity as a common connection for all learners, it is universal in its application. The scenarios presented above, although quite culturally diverse, display similarities in the obstacles that must be conquered. If the learner has the opportunity to* *relate to a familiar setting (distinctive learning environment) or circumstance, then he should have little problem retaining the information for later use. Moving through the dance composition becomes a process. And as the steps begin to fall into place, soon the learner will be dancing with rhythm and grace.*

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# Professionals' Workplace Devaluation: Implications for the Workplace

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***Abstract:*** *This research paper highlights the experience of professionals' workplace devaluation and its implications for adult educators, professionals and decision-makers. What professionals learn from the experience and how they learn are also addressed. The study collected data through a series of in-depth dialogic interviews with four self-identified professionals from diverse professions employed in different organizations. A grounded theory analysis of the case studies identified a common process and its interrelationships with six constructs. The results establish a foundation for greater understanding of workplace devaluation and provide insights for effective professional praxis.*

The experience of professionals'[1] workplace devaluation is a relatively unexamined area in the literature that has significant implications in how work gets done and in how individuals learn and think about themselves. Organizations are experiencing tremendous change and seek professionals who have the expertise, specialized knowledge and problem solving skills to work in an increasingly complex interdependent environment. (Achawls and Renesch, 1995; Bowditch and Buono, 1994; Rogers, 1995; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). Many professionals, recognized for their experience, knowledge, competence and commitment to their field, experience a contradiction when they realize that decision-makers ignore their contributions. An increasing number of professionals, regardless of gender, position, education, race or profession, agree that this experience devalues their contributions and demeans their sense of self. This experience, *workplace devaluation*, cuts to the core of an individual's identity.

The immediate consequence of workplace devaluation is emotion: anger, self-doubt, helplessness, grief, fear, depression, illness, blame or vindication. The outcomes for the organization may include: decreased intellectual capital, lower productivity, high absenteeism, low morale, increased resignations, more conflict, formal grievances, or lawsuits. While the consequences of workplace devaluation are addressed in research, the experience and the learning that occurs are not. The literature of adult development, adult learning, organization development, and organizational behavior provided the conceptual framework for this inquiry.

**Conceptual Framework.** Learning from life experience is a fundamental theme of adult education. Dewey (1938) emphasized that learning occurs only when the learner interacts or interprets the experience through an internal process. He did not describe the internal process. In his explanation of the andragogical model of facilitation, Knowles (1990) viewed adults' life experiences as the "richest resource" for their learning. He added a caveat that might be applicable to the experience of professionals' workplace devaluation: "…in any situation in which adults' experience is ignored or devalued, they perceive this as not rejecting just their experience but rejecting them as persons (p. 60)." Although no concise, universal definition exists for adult learning, five key themes, inherent to learning from experience, characterize the many definitions in the literature (Boucouvalas, 1993; Boucouvalas and Krupp, 1989; Fenwick,

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[1] Professionals in this study refer to individuals recognized for their skill, experience, knowledge, competence, and currency in a particular field or occupation.

1994; Jarvis, 1987; Knowles, 1990; Mezirow, 1991; Polanyi, 1976): (a) intentional or involuntary change; (b) an interaction of reflection and life experience; (c) experience does not always result in learning (d) some experiences result in no conscious learning; and (e) some experiences result in transpersonal learning.

Adult learning literature also focuses on professionals' learning, specifically reflection and dialogue. Mezirow (1991) advocated that individuals construct meaning of their experience through a critical self-reflective process that challenges the individual's basic beliefs, and values. Fenwick (1994) suggests that dialogue is a venue that can hinder or encourage professional learning. She observed that factors including power relations, norms of discourse, and an individual's sense of identity add complexity to social interactions. Gallois (1993) noted that people with greater power in interpersonal communication do not pay attention or understand the concerns of people with less power.

Adult development literature (Aslanian and Brickell, 1980; Kegan, 1994; Neugarten, 1969) suggests that life events precipitate development and may result in learning. Neugarten, (1969) posits that the timing of the life event determines the effect on adult learning and development. "Off-time" events, such as divorce, loss of job, or serious illness, that occur unexpectedly, are more likely to trigger learning than "on-time" events, such as marriage or career progression that occur when expected. Aslanian and Brickell (1980) observed that "trigger events" that cause adults to cope with change often result in learning. Merriam and Clark (1991) found that personal crises in adults' work life or personal life often results in learning and growth. They noted a greater likelihood for adults to restructure meaning when the event was rated as "bad" and that significantly more learning events occurred in the work arena. Tennant (1990), on the other hand, suggests that a study of developmental change requires an analysis of common everyday interactions and the dialogues contained within them. Kegan (1994) emphasized that adult development includes howadults make meaning of the expectations and cultural demands of self and others experienced in their everyday worlds. Kegan illustrates his theory with "real" workplace issues and anecdotes, applicable to professionals' workplace devaluation.

**Related Studies.** The "learning from experience" and transformative learning literature highlights the interaction of life experiences with the learning process resulting in the interpretation and construction of knowledge. This body of literature, taken as a whole, articulates the holistic process of learning integrating the role of reflection and the emotional aspect of learning (Boyd and Fales, 1983; Boud and Griffin, 1987, Boud and Walker, 1990; Boyd and Myers, 1988, Cranton, 1997, Taylor, 1997). Many of these studies give voice to the feelings experienced throughout the learning process, often a strong and emotional range of emotion. Some examples, common to the studies, are discomfort, grief, rage, anger, betrayal, helplessness, and letting go. Taylor (1997) observed that reflection and learning do not begin until the emotions have been validated and processed.

Traditionally, an individual's emotions were often ignored in the workplace. Recently, more studies focus on emotions and issues in the workplace. (Allcorn, 1994; Boucouvalas, 1996; Hyatt and Gottleib, 1987/1993; Hochschild, 1983; Ryan and Oesterich, 1998) Savage, 1997; Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989). Allcorn (1994) views anger as an emotion consciously selected by individuals after interpreting an experience as hurtful, frustrating or humiliating. His research recommends the management and control of anger. Boucouvalas (1996) suggests that the anger literature has limitations and that the transpersonal orientation provides a framework to better understand and transform anger. Other studies have explored the emotions of fear (Ryan and Oesterich, 1998), rejection (Savage, 1997) and failure (Hyatt and Gottleib, 1987/1993). Hochschild (1983) noted the commercialization of emotions and its consequences in her study of the service industries. Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) studied the nexus of rules that govern emotional expression and the employees' understanding of the organization's culture. They concluded that the practice of leaders actively creating and sustaining an elaborate culture is a subtle and powerful form of organizational control.

Organization literature has several studies on related workplace issues. Three seminal studies (Kanter, 1977; and Morrison, White, Van Velsor, and The Center for Creative Leadership, 1987; Terkel, 1970) add strong voices to concerns about workplace issues. Ferguson (1984) presented a strong argument that bureaucratic power structures are the primary source of individuals' oppression in organizations. Atkouf (1992) advocated the necessity to change the rules and very nature of power and control perpetuated in organizations. Some researchers (Gilbert, 1994; Ely, 1995) argued that the construction of gender and social identity in the workplace is a major element of devaluation for men and women. Witt (1993) noted the contribution of work alienation as a factor in professionals not being valued within organizations.

**Purpose.** This exploratory research was undertaken to describe how professionals experience workplace devaluation and to discover if a common process exists in how each professional managed the situation. In addition, this research planned to identify what professionals learned from the experience and to ascertain how learning occurred. Three research questions guided this study: (a) What is the experience of professionals' workplace devaluation? (b) How did professionals learn from the experience? (c) What did the professionals learn from the experience?

**Method.** The case study research design, based on cooperative inquiry (Reason and Rowan, 1981) and grounded theory analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990/1998), was selected to elicit a knowledge base of the workplace devaluation experience and to initiate systematic theory development. The unit of analysis is the professional in an organization. The design integrated sensitivity to human risks with a goal of constructing knowledge that respects the participants' reality of their lived experience (Stake, 1995).

Applying purposive sampling[2], four self-identified professionals were selected who met the selection criteria: (a) had several years experience with their organization; (b) were previously valued by the organization; (c) were current in their field; (d) had experienced workplace devaluation; and (e) were able to articulate insights, thoughts and emotions on their experience. The four participants, two men and two women, represented the professions of health services and marketing, law, information technology, and education. Their four organizations, located in the Eastern United States, ranged in size from approximately 500 to more than 10,000 employees. Professional responsibilities within their organizations represented middle manager, first-line supervisor, project manager and professional staff. The participants' ages ranged from 32 to 55 years. Two participants were married, one was divorced, and the other participant was single. One participant had one child and two grandchildren. Another participant had two children. Two participants had no children. All participants had completed a four-year baccalaureate degree and some graduate work ranging from masters' level courses to doctoral studies.

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[2] Purposive sampling requires the systematic selection of participants to maximize differences (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990/1998)

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Data were collected through a series of three, in-depth, face-to-face, audio taped, dialogic interviews with each participant over a four-month period. After each interview, participants reviewed the transcript for accuracy and the researcher did a preliminary analysis to formulate questions and probes for the next interview. An iterative grounded-theory analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990/1998), using the principles of theoretical sensitivity (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), identified a process common to the professionals' workplace devaluation experience. The participants met as a focus group and confirmed that the process depicted their experience. During the analysis phase, the researcher worked closely with participants, peers, and academic advisors to ensure that the findings met the research criteria of precision, rigor, and verification (Strauss and Corbin, 1990/1998).

**Findings.** The three research questions organize the findings of this inquiry. *What is the experience of professionals' workplace devaluation?* A rich description of the professionals' experience of workplace devaluation unfolded in their narratives (Klunk, 1999). All participants expressed feelings that primarily encompassed the emotions of anger, fear, and powerlessness during the experience. The four professionals described a painful, emotional experience different from anything they consciously remembered. Their analogies of the experience create a vivid picture: "total rejection;" "preparing for a funeral;" "someone made a hole at the top of my head and just started stripping me of my skin;" or "being an editor on a Ruppert Murdoch[3] newspaper when he decides to edit your editorial." Yet, the professionals continued to perform their responsibilities in a competent and professional manner while they attempted to manage their emotions and to create balance for themselves. In the four case studies, the expressed duration varies from over two years to sixteen years with no one stating that they had closure on the experience. Personal factors[4], external to the organization, had the greatest influence on the duration. At this time, three participants remain with the same organization. One participant began a new job with a small, private-sector organization a week before the third interview.

*How did the professionals learn from the experience?* The participants stated that the data collection methods--dialogic interviewing, reviewing the interview transcript prior to the next interview--facilitated their understanding of the experience by providing an effective means of reflecting. The researcher observed that the method also evoked their felt emotions. The data are inconclusive.

.Although each professional's experience was very different, a seven-phase process emerged (Figure 1). Each phase was influenced by six constructs[5] and had an external and an internal focus. The external focus highlights the public persona and the interrelationships of the constructs between the professional, decision-makers, and others[6]. The data suggests that the

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[3] Ruppert Murdoch owns half the media in the world.

[4] A composite list, in alphabetical order, are: age, career opportunities, coping techniques, family, relocation flexibility, income, professional's personality, short- and long-term goals, world view.

[5] The six constructs are: autonomy, communication, personalization, emotion, authority, and recognition.

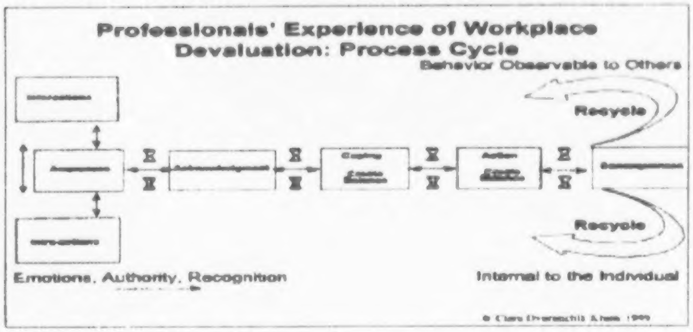
Professionals' Experience of Workplace Devaluation: Process Cycle
Behavior Observable to Others
Recycle
Coping
Action
Recycle
Emotions, Authority, Recognition
Internal to the Individual

Figure 1

internal focus may provoke reflection as the intra-actions[7] react to the total experience. The process illustrates how four professionals refocused the force of their emotion from powerlessness, fear, or anger to confidence in their ability to take action that might change the situation. The process can also be viewed as a lens to interpret how the participants constructed meaning from the workplace devaluation experience. The process began with an interaction that sparked a strong emotional reaction. During the interaction, the emotional confluence of three constructs[8] resulted in awareness of workplace devaluation. All participants experienced a decrease in autonomy and found organizational barriers inhibiting communication of the issues central to their experience of workplace devaluation. The professionals' reaction to the interaction was to flee (leave the organization) or fight (act defensively).

Emotion appears to be the core influence in the process. The professionals consistently described the experience with language associated with anger, fear, or powerlessness. Managing the emotions became a priority throughout the process. All participants recognized the power of organizational authority in relation to career-defining actions such as assignments, promotion, or

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[6] Others refer to colleagues, customers, co-workers, family, and friends.

[7] Intra-actions are the dynamics of conscious thought, felt emotions, untested assumptions, unexamined beliefs, and the unconscious.

[8] The confluence of the three constructs are: loss of autonomy, inability to communicate concerns to decision-makers, and personalization. Personalization is the professionals' interpretation that an interaction is a personal attack on their personal and professional identity. Personalization causes an interpersonal or intrapersonal conflict for the professional.

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job loss. This recognition was acknowledged whether they perceived the supervisor as a positive or negative influence in the experience[9]. The participants found that the source of recognition influenced the process more than the type of recognition. As the participants examined their options to create balance and implemented strategies in the cope and act phases, they recognized the power they had to influence the situation. Thus, whether the participants left or stayed with the organization, each knew the rationale for their decision.

Two types of workplace devaluation emerged from the data. One type results when professionals recognize an intentional threat to their reputation or self-concept by another individual or group. The second type results from an organizational culture with barriers to open communication and little consideration for how professionals perform their responsibilities. All participants experienced both types of workplace devaluation.

*What did professionals learn from the experience?* Participants were not able to answer this question with any degree of clarity. The data suggest participants gained tacit knowledge. All professionals articulated some learning from the experience. The extent of the learning is yet to be determined. The researcher categorized the learning as professional knowledge, organizational knowledge, interpersonal knowledge and intrapersonal knowledge. All participants found they learned or gained more insights about themselves (intrapersonal knowledge) than any other learning, followed by a greater in-depth understanding of the organizational culture (organization knowledge). The professionals in this study expressed few new insights in interpersonal learning or professional knowledge. The data suggest that the fewer insights stated for interpersonal knowledge or in their professional expertise may be a result of the fact that successful professionals in organizations have substantive skills and knowledge in these two categories of learning. The professionals, except for one, did not think of learning as an outcome of their experience till asked by the researcher during the data collection.

**Implications for the Workplace.** The findings identify the personal cost of workplace devaluation to the professional. Implicit in the findings are the business cost of workplace devaluation in productivity, retention of needed expertise, economic ramifications and possible legal expenses. The findings suggest that public acknowledgement and dialogue along with accountability for early recognition and action by professionals and decision-makers may shorten the duration of this process and facilitate learning and growth. The findings also highlight the responsibility of adult educators to understand adult learning and adult development theories and to present a holistic picture of learning that acknowledges the possible range of experienced emotions along with content and skills.

**Conclusions.** The experience of professionals' workplace devaluation is a complex phenomenon. The emotional confluence of loss of autonomy, inability to communicate with the decision-makers on issues of concern, and personalization of the interaction resulted in conscious awareness of workplace devaluation experience. The emotional and painful descriptions are similar to the findings in the literature on learning from experience (Boud and Griffith, 1987; Boyd and Fales, 1983), transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991, Taylor, 1997, Boyd and Myers,

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[9] Two participants identified the supervisor as the main cause of their experience. Two participants identified the supervisor as supportive and identified the organization culture as the primary cause of their experience.

1988); and transpersonal learning (Miller and Cook-Greuter, 1994, Boucouvalas, 1996). The professionals' acknowledgment of their strong emotions to themselves and the presentation of their professional (unemotional) persona also support the literature on emotions in organizations (Hochschild, 1983; Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989), and to a lesser degree, impression management (Goffman, 1959/1973). The reflective process illustrates how these professionals applied their skills of problem solving, and innovation. Many aspects of the process that emerged from the traumatic experience of workplace devaluation are similar to life transitions (Bridges, 1981) and the grief that accompanies a loss or death. The phrase, mourning for your ego, resonated with the four professionals to describe the process. Although all recognized that they learned from the process, the professionals also recognized that they had lost something of themselves. The emotional descriptions, even eleven years later, illuminate the complexity of the experience and the potential for debilitating consequences for the individual, the organization and perhaps for society.

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# Symbolic Representations as Mediators for Meaning Construction: An Exploration of Transformative Pedagogy Within a Professional Development Context

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## Abstract

*Features of instructional environments are examined that aim at fostering transformative learning among adults in a professional development context in higher education. The study focuses on the relationship among the student experiences in a formal higher education setting, the content, and instructional methods used within the setting. This paper reports a study of the critical features of instructional environments designed by the teachers who espouse ideals consistent with the aim of fostering transformative learning.*

Integral to transformative learning is integration of the learning task with learners' biographies and experiences. Such integration provides opportunities to reconstruct meanings associated with these experiences and the contexts in which they took place. According to transformation theory scholars, this process may lead to fundamental changes in one's sense of self (Dirkx, 1998) or in broader social structures in which one's life is embedded (Cunningham, 1998). Stimulated by Mezirow's (1978) provocative study of women's re-entry into community colleges, transformation theory is now being used to better understand this deeper form of learning in a wide variety of continuing education contexts. Much of the research and theory, however, has focused on the nature of experiences and cognitive structures associated with the meaning-making processes characteristic of transformative learning (Cranton, 1994; Mezirow, 1991). For the most part, these studies have paid relatively little attention to the specific contribution that content or subject matter and the instructional methods make to the transformative learning process (Taylor, 1997). The purpose of this study was to explore transformative learning from a pedagogical perspective. Specifically, we sought to better understand instructional contexts aimed at fostering transformative learning among adults. Of particular interest within these classroom learning experiences was the dynamic interplay between the particular content and teaching methods used by the instructors.

## Conceptual Framework

In this study, we focused on how the instructor's beliefs, the teaching methods used, and the content together contributed to an instructional environment characterized by a potential for inner work and transformative learning. The context for this study was a professional development experience in higher education for individuals pursuing the degree in educational leadership. Both instructors included in this study espoused ideals consistent with the aim of fostering transformative learning. Theorists have pointed out the transformative potential inherent in contexts of professional development (Cranton, 1996) and, in particular, the study of leadership development (Quinn, 1996). Echoing much of the transformation literature, Quinn (1996) suggests that, when dealing with organizational problems, we sometimes need to alter our assumptions, rules, or paradigms and develop new theories about ourselves and our surrounding environments (p. 7). To develop oneself as an effective organizational leader, he argues, is to develop a new Self (p. 9). This focus on the Self and transformative learning as "inner work" is reflected in other forms of professional development as well, such as teacher formation in higher education (Palmer (1998).

To analyze the setting from a transformative perspective, we chose to focus on teacher beliefs, methods, and content studied. In terms of beliefs, we sought to understand the *ideals* (Pratt, 1997) to which the instructors adhered, the beliefs, assumptions, and values which guided their practice as transformative pedagogy, and how they made sense of their instruction from this perspective. We were also interested in understanding how the text or subject matter connects in a deep way with learners' lives. About the text, Palmer (1998) argues, "[W]hat we teach will never take unless it connects with the inward, living core of our students' lives" (p. 31). The idea of transformative learning as inner work is not merely a narcissistic, me-oriented perspective. It recognizes that "the work of the world" can only be accomplished through a deep sense of personal identity and integrity. Palmer (1998) refers to this process as doing the outer work through an inner journey. O'Reilley (1998) speaks of a pedagogy that allows the spirit to come home, "to Self, to community, and the revelations of reality" (p. 3). We can only be open to the needs of the world if we are open to a deeper awareness and understanding of our selves.

## Methods

The present study utilized an interpretive approach aiming to understand actions and meanings in particular contexts (Muncey & McQuillan 1996). The setting consisted of the classroom instruction of two teachers of a graduate program in educational leadership at a large Midwestern University. The professors were known by students and colleagues as utilizing deeply engaging pedagogical practices. They described their own practices as aiming toward transformative learning. Three courses focusing on organizational theory and leadership were selected for study. Data collection occurred over nine months and included participant observation, document analysis (syllabi, tentative agenda sheets, handout materials, students written works), and in-depth interviews with each professor and a selection of students who were engaged in the same experience (taking the same courses) at the time. All data were subjected to ethnographic analysis.

## Findings

Five themes emerged which characterized key features of the instructional environments as they relate to transformative pedagogy. These were (a) leadership viewed as a field of inquiry, (b) opportunity for students to explore new roles, (c) presence and processing of social conflict, (d) opportunity for action and reflection on that action, and (e) the creation of myths and rituals within the learning setting. The instructors use their curriculum in a way that conveys a sense of leadership as a field of inquiry, in which learners name and explore complex relations within their real jobs and as those relate to themselves. Learners experience situations in this environment which offer new roles , different from those the students have in their daily lives. The instructors also believed that, in a transformative environment, the experiencing and processing of social conflict by the students was critical to the whole learning experience. Students need the experience of novelty, ambiguity, and anxiety under unpredictable circumstances. In addition, as one instructor put it, "Educational leadership is about action." If educational leadership is about doing, than it has to have a pedagogy that allows learners the opportunity "to do and reflect on their actions; in all instances, the real material of the class is as much the experience of the students as it is what their reading is." Finally, transformative pedagogy involves the creation of myths and rituals within the formal learning setting.

For example, in the class on organizational theory, leadership concepts helped learners unpack the structural, symbolic, and political frames of organizations. The instructors use these concepts as a framework to consider issues around leadership. The concepts are introduced by means of propositions structured in the form of experiential exercises, selected and ordered by the instructors so that learners' experiences in class were associated with certain concepts of leadership. Students' beliefs about Self and their understanding of educational leadership are challenged by means of those experiences which involve the probing of new roles, surfacing the conflict, and the use of active forms of imagination such as myth, symbol and drama. To reflect on these features of instructional environment, as well as to support an interactive view on creation of meaning of leadership, we will briefly refer to two cases - one from each instructor's practice.

***Case 1: Drama and Symbol of "Organizational Stories"*** When introducing the students to different frames of organizations in the course on organizational theory, Dr. Malcom used an approach which is described in the literature as "organizational stories" (Ochs, Smith, & Taylor, 1990). She would not view them as monologues or cultural artifacts but would focus instead on *how* they are told and on the meanings, identities, and ideologies that emerge in the process of telling them. The stories can be told both verbally and non-verbally, so that myths and rituals can be created within the space and time of a session. An example of using the creation of myths and rituals is "A Close Examination of Culture" session. The idea here was to introduce the content - the concept of the cultural frame of organizations - in ways that make immediate and fundamental sense to the students. Malcolm introduced the word *Ecotonos* as an analogy for the multicultural nature of a society, an environment formed by overlapping, adjoining communities. This session was a drama played by different groups of students, spatially arranged in circles. Each group had to think about and represent attitudes, beliefs, time orientation, and kinesthetic space that were characteristic of exotic communities they were representatives of: *Anthiens, Delphinians, Aquilians* . While the first represented the nurturing, peacemaking attitudes, the Delphinians resembled a modern American culture which is more individualistic. The last group lived "by examples of our Father" and related to the family ties.

Within their assigned "culture," the participants had to understand the language of artifacts (daily agendas, rituals, tasks), language of time (the one lived referring to the values of the past while the others might have been oriented into the future), and language of space (physical kinesthetic relationships). Representation of this sort, it was thought, aims to push the students to understand organizational culture beneath all the structures of the cultural environment and to present their understanding as a ***metaphor*** to the rest of the class in a creative way. By drawing on ***the image*** which symbolized the culture, the students were to *apply* their metaphor to a concrete task that the professor passed around. The task was given in a form of a case study and was entitled The *New Plant Site*. The different "cultural communities" were to determine the best site for the new plant. Time was of the essence in the student decisions. Space was another critical dimension in relationships between the students. There was a certain spatial language within each of the cultures - gestures, distance between the speakers, etc. So part of the story here was exploring how things work in different cultural contexts, and one reason for that, presumably, was to get some perspective on how "to assess the cultural/symbolic tenor of the organizations where students work" ( excerpt from the course syllabus).

By means of such a game-session, Malcolm was modeling the analysis of the organizational cultural language for the students to understand: What is going on within the "cultural community"? In the assignment sheet, the professor described the purpose for such a class: *"This is a purposeful activity that asks you to employ the chapters of Bolman & Deal, and Morgan to articulate: What we do, How we talk (utilizing specialized language), Reveal the tangible objects, Examine the use of space and time, and Assess the levels and kinds of participation with attention to diversity and forms of leadership."* This excerpt shows how the content, the subject matter and the formal text of the theoretical course - the concept of the cultural frame of organizations as interpreted in books by Bolman & Deal and Morgan, - are explored by means of applying the concepts of leadership to the student experiences as a framework for analysis. This framework has its spatial, temporal, and material dimensions which is manifest through social interactions among the students and amplified at the interface of the individual and the social meaning making processes.

On the one hand, while moving back and forth between individual perceptions of the culture being represented and the contradictions of instructions given in the assignment cards to different groups, developing a group metaphor and confronting the opposite beliefs from "other cultures", the students developed novel meanings of *selves*. Excerpts from the student interviews reflect this finding: " [The activity] was good for me because I learned about the lack of my knowledge about myself." ; "When you are going to interact with somebody, you can't put your own perceptions on that person. I felt that's what the professor was trying to get us to click on. I think a lot of that is coming from my own being a Native American, from my native environment. It's crucial to that learning... I use a lot that we did in class in my work with [residence assistants] where we have to communicate, to interact, and to listen to everybody."

On the other hand, by virtue of creation of "the space of shared boundary" (Briskin 1996), while exploring the organizational culture, the students were also developing novel meanings *between* them. In Eisenberg's (1990, 142) terms, they were not only focusing on anyone individual's "compliance-gaining strategies", but rather were investigating the emerging pattern of group behavior and its influence on decision making process. All players of this drama were exposed, in a metaphorical way, to a controversial situation (e.g., a school board meeting), thus illuminating the complex issues of what does it take for teachers to take leadership to do the best for kids. This would be an example for a dilemma which may be faced by the students in their real work organizations and which is modeled by the professor in class by means of an experiential activity that involves much of the participants' imagination and metaphoric thinking. According to the literature (Dirkx 1998), imagination amplifies the effect of the experience and the reflection on it.

***Case 2: "Crossing Comfort Zones"*** In his concern about how people differ, how they struggle with each other's attitudes when making decisions, Dr. Johnston is convinced that social and personal conflict promote change in the structures of society and in the structures of the individual's psyche. The responsibility of leadership is not to suppress conflict, but to surface it, deal with it, manage it, make it productive. For example, an arena for experiencing ambiguity and surfacing a conflict was the Bone Game, adapted by Johnston from the Indian folk tradition and mentioned by the interviewed students as one of the strongest experiences of the course. Many limitations of the game rules (e.g., separate location of the groups; communication between the groups only through a representative; one person talking at a time) engaged learners in a series of conflicts; in communication, finding ways for collaborative decision making, and dealing with their own individual assumptions that had been roughly tested. As the interviewees recalled, some students look exasperated, some felt pushed by the rules to feel guilty for "every injustice on the earth." The idea here involved the learner choosing these feelings and consciously taking the focus off him or herself and how he or she feels in class, and placing the focus rather on the feelings of those group members who were trying to share their experiences with the learner. In other words, learners were being asked to concentrate more on identifying with the worlds of others. As one learner described his impression of the experience, "It was a very powerful experience. We were forced really to work together, and there was no way to go around it, no way to hide from that... It was long, it was tedious, I was really embarrassed some times." These observations reflect those of Scott (1991), where people "entered into the action-reaction-reflection process; they became aware of the distortion to their assumptions through the action of those assumptions and reflection through critique." The whole class was so engaged in surfacing sociolinguistic meaning perspectives that they forgo their break. At the same time there was a lot of anxiety going on. "Still", the same student suggests, AI really wanted to get this experience what this supposed to be. I was getting [at times] into frustration, and, sometimes, anger... But I felt pride of accomplishment. My anger and my frustration were worthwhile." In this situation , students were frustrated with the way messages were sent and received, and the meanings that were spoken out in different languages by learners who had different intentions, feelings and desires. These processes seem critical to a deeper understanding of transformative pedagogy.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The findings suggest that three key factors are critical to understanding of pedagogy as transformative: (a) relationship between the formal text and emergence of a metatext; (b) vision of professional development as "inner work;" and (c) learner performance that involves creation of myths and rituals, imagination and creativity. In the literature and research, we can find how the three are intertwined. If a formal text - the content that is to be negotiated and the meaning of which is to be constructed by the students - represents outer work (Palmer, 1998), the teacher's task is to engage participants in a process of negotiation of this text in ways that would be most authentic to their inner journey. Such strategies can be identified in the pedagogy of drama and the ancient ways of performance embedded in different cultures throughout the world. This aspect was evident in the Bone Game. This perspective also helps explain how action occurs under conditions of limited shared understandings. Even in situations where one specific type of experience does not follow the norms of communicative clarity and openness, but involves minimally disclosive exchanges, the social entity of a group represents something powerful enough to allow group members to derive satisfaction from acting together. Such situations can arise through coordinated action and balance autonomy and interdependence in organizing. Eisenberg (1990) refers to this process as *jamming*, analogous to improvisational, coordinated actions in music and sports. The difficult part is that educators may not feel prepared to deal with what might be uncovered in the process of individual and collective critical reflection on psychic assumptions.

Transformative pedagogy implies a shift in instructional emphasis from structure to process, from enforcing the students' competence to engaging them into performance that would allow them to develop familiarity with the dialectics of the ongoing processes of interpersonal and intergroup relationships in all kinds of communities of practice. A series of performances can become a series of mediations into the learners' study of Self and, by virtue of these mediations, help students gain certain insights around the formal text of the class. In this view, creating learning environments assumes a change in the perspective of the formal learning environment, from static structures to "sociosymbolic fields" (Turner, 1986, p. 21). Formal text, like the assets of educational leadership, could be introduced and negotiated through symbolic action the genre of which would be shaped by both instructor's beliefs about the text and learners' conscious reflecting on cultural representations in which they are embedded. The symbolic messages and signals that learners exchange inside the frame of the activities, that are designed by the teachers and are improvised by the students, build a projective system *- a metatext -* which, in its turn, functions as a pedagogic tool, providing data for student reflection on and analysis of Self.

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# Transcending Boundaries:
# Building Community Through Residential Adult learning

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*This paper discusses the potential for residential adult learning experiences in the formation of cohort learning groups in both distance (computer conferencing) and face-to-face groups in graduate adult education programs.*

**2:00 A. M. Nancy can't sleep. She twists and turns but the chatter in her head continues. So many thoughts, so many ideas, so many theoretical perspectives to assimilate. Since sleep is unlikely she decides to head over to the computer lab to put her thoughts down on paper. After all, her assignment is due in two days and she might as well put the time to good use. She gets out of bed, pulls on her jeans and tip toes out, being careful not to wake her roommate.**

**Outside of the computer lab she runs into Annette who is making a trip to the vending machine for her third candy bar of the night. The two women enter the lab together and are greeted by Rick who is revising the latest draft of his paper. The three enter into a conversation about critical reflection which continues until the sun rises.**

While it sounds as if Nancy, Annette and Rick are 18 year olds on a college campus, they are actually members of a cohort of middle aged graduate students at a residential workshop at the beginning of their program of study. Cohort learning is a concept that is being embraced by an increasing number of institutions. A cohort is defined in higher education as a group of students who take all of their course work together and thus become interdependent through varied collaborative learning experiences. (Lawrence, 1996). For a cohort to be successful, it is essential that the students get to know one other and develop healthy working relationships. This paper will describe one university's attempt to create these learning communities via students' participation in residential experiences at the start of their degree programs. Two specific experiences will be referred to: a two week residential workshop preceding a three year doctoral cohort program, and a three day residence preceding a masters program delivered entirely online.

Residential adult learning is not a new concept. It has its roots in the Danish folk schools of the early 1800's, referred to by founder N.S.F. Gruntvig as "schools for life". *Folkelighed*, or folk education, means rooted in the culture and spirit of a people, or learning from the heart. (Spicer, 1991) The Danish folk schools were residential with a blurring of work and leisure, teacher and student, and theory and practice. In North America the Highlander Research and Education Center established by Myles Horton as the Highlander Folk School, continues to bring people together to problem solve and create social change. The participants eat, sleep, work and play together, thus creating an interdependent learning community. The purposes of these programs and other contemporary folk schools such as The Clearing in Door County Wisconsin and the Folk School in the Mountains sponsored by the University of Wyoming differ from ours in one significant way. In all of these programs, the residential component comprises the learning experience in its entirety. In our case, the residence is designed to build the community and set the stage for ongoing collaborative work.

### Doctoral Residence

The two week residence (Summer Institute) which precedes the doctoral program is designed for the students to begin to build strong working relationships that will sustain them over a three year period of intensive study. Since students meet for only one weekend a month and are spread out around the country it is important to build in ways to keep them connected. Secluded at a retreat facility with limited access to telephones, television or daily newspapers, students have the luxury of immersing themselves into their studies. One participant described her experiences in this way:

> We ate together, slept together, studied and played together. We worked in groups and individually, gave each other advice and support; we shared stories, life histories, and our philosophies about everything and nothing. We gathered in our rooms, the classrooms, around a campfire, computer lab, dining hall, local tavern and on the pier overlooking the lake. We wrote papers, read books, sang songs, listened, climbed ropes and ladders, danced, read each others paper and discussed. We questioned, we learned, we shared, we trusted, we laughed and cried together. We bonded.

### Online Residence

In the fall of 1998 we began offering our Masters program online. Our students come from around the country and we hope to soon expand to an international population. We wanted to incorporate the best practices of our face to face program which is a cohort based program. We realized that online learning is increasingly becoming the preferred option for many adults yet the retention rate is significantly lower than face to face programs. One of the reasons cited has been the isolation and lack of motivation many students feel when they are working alone with only their computer for company. When students come together and actually live with cohort members for a number of days, the effects are long lasting. They have a face, a body and a memory of shared experiences to attach to the name on their computer screen.

### Characteristics of the Residential Experience

This section discusses four characteristics of residential adult learning including: immersion, group support/relationship development, intentionality of course content and opportunities for informal learning.

**Immersion** A major benefit of the residential experience is that it allows students the luxury of temporarily putting other aspects of their life on hold, referred to by Fleming (1998) as detachment. This is a rare opportunity for busy adults who hold responsible jobs and often have family commitments as well. Meals are prepared by the kitchen staff, there are no televisions or easily accessible telephones. The only decisions that need to be made are related to the immediacy of the task at hand. Opportunities for group conversation or quiet individual reflection are plentiful. Although some do check in periodically with the office and call home often, their time at the residence is totally devoted to their studies and getting to know fellow cohort members. Had students commuted home each night they would have likely gotten involved with family concerns or other life issues and would not have been able to participate as fully in the learning experience.

**Group support/relationship development** A further benefit of being in residence is the opportunity to develop supportive relationships with group members who will be fellow travelers on the learning journey. While caring and supportive relationships are often a phenomenon of cohorts groups when students meet together once a week for a year or more (Lawrence, 1996), the constancy of the interaction in the residential setting accelerates the process. Students formed bonds and readily shared resources. They realized that there were different areas of strengths within the group and did not hesitate to ask for help when needed. As one participant related:

> I remember those late night sessions in the lab. I am not very computer literate and there was always someone to help. The beauty of it is after a while I didn't feel bashful about asking [for help] because I knew nobody was going to say. "Will you just go away because I am busy". We always took time for each other, and I think we developed that sense of caring really quickly. We knew who needed what for each other, and we were willing to give that. I don't think you are ever going to find that if you just go to and from school. If you don't live with them and really understand that you can depend on them and they do have certain strengths they bring to the table, as we all do, then it will only take place in that kind of community.

In her work on developing circle communities, Baldwin (1994) discussed the concept of holding up the rim. The cohort forms a circle, at times physically but always metaphorically. Individual struggles become group struggles. If one member falls down or cannot hold on for a time, the group members hold up the rim together. This level of support continues far beyond the residence as people form study groups to explore difficult concepts, share notes, drafts of papers and have frequent discussions over telephone and email.

Groups who spend time together at an intense accelerated level often develop their own culture through the sharing of stories and experiences. Certain code words like "green jello" (served daily in the cafeteria) or "the H word" (learning to understand and pronounce hegemony) immediately trigger smiles and memories of shared experience. Graduate students often find themselves thinking about new ideas and developing insights on a variety of topics. When they try to share their thoughts with colleagues and family members they are often met with polite indifference. They gradually begin to realize that the community they have developed through the residential component and sustained over time is the one unique place where they can meet kindred spirits to have the kind of meaningful conversations they crave.

Bonds formed at the interpersonal as well as the academic level. One participant was going through major personal transitions including a move to a new state and leaving a job.

> There was a lot going on in my life so for me it [the residence] created a space that equalized my trauma and chaos of what was going on in my life. . . It enabled me to put all that very much aside because there was always someone else to talk to. So for me

> on a personal level as well as in terms of what we call the professional, the academic, I think it really blasted us into another universe.

Another woman learned just three weeks prior the residence that she had cancer. She came to the two week session still recovering from surgery and anticipating chemotherapy sessions to follow. The tremendous support and care she received during the residential session has persisted more than a year into the program and has enabled her to continue with a rigorous program of doctoral study while simultaneously battling cancer.

This feeling of interpersonal closeness is certainly not universal for all students and all groups. Some are more private and seek out more personal space. It appeared that those students who lived with roommates or in communal housing had a different experience of bonding than those who lived alone. While many adult are initially reluctant to share a room with a virtual stranger, those who did, often found that they achieved a special level of closeness. Late night spontaneous conversations, hunting for allergy medication in the wee hours and coping with plumbing mishaps served to bring people together. Those who lived alone either by choice or circumstance did not experience this same level of bonding.

**Intentionality of Course Content** After talking with many of the students who participated in one of the residential learning experiences, and reviewing their written reflections, I have come to the realization that it is not enough to simply bring people together in residence and expect that they would automatically bond as a group. The content and focus of the experience has a major impact on the outcome. The Highlander workshops had specific objectives of developing leadership skills among oppressed people with the larger goal of creating societal change. The residential workshops for the online and doctoral students are designed as orientation to the program and to build strong working groups. Both include credit bearing courses that work toward these ends.

The online workshop includes two courses, Adult Development and Learning and Adult Learning in Groups. The courses begin during the weekend workshop and continue online over the next eight weeks. The students engage in a number of activities to foster critical reflection and collaborative learning. Last year's workshop highlighted a group problem solving activity and an outdoor activity designed to "deepen awareness" and acquaint people with multiple ways of seeing and working together, based on the work of Lawrence and Mealman (1996).

The students in the doctoral program took three courses which were designed purposefully to acquaint students with the underlying philosophies of the program, including critical reflection, collaborative learning and life history. Students shared papers to elicit peer feedback and engaged in a number of small group activities. Some were initially concerned about sharing their life histories with relative strangers. In most cases this concern was quickly abated as supportive bonds developed. One woman experienced writer's block in her initial draft of her life history paper. There were places she couldn't or didn't want to go. In a session with three supportive cohorts, the walls came down as she shared her story. It was a profound and emotional moment.

Another highlight of the Summer Institute was participation in a day long course led by OWLS (Outdoor Wisconsin Leadership School). The course included a number of physical and psychological challenges designed to promote team building and trust. The group felt this activity was successful in helping to foster interdependence and work through some of the conflicts they were experiencing as they attempted to create their own governance system.

An important component of the success of the residential experience is the involvement of the students in the learning process and structure. According to Foucault-Mohammed "The first principle of the folk high school is the elimination of the artificial barriers between teachers and students." (1989 p. 32) Students have complete control over the learning agenda. Teachers are seen as resources for learning rather that as "officials to determine what constituted the educated person." (Spicer, 1991 p. 12) In this way, any power differential is minimized which allows for a more democratic structure.

Gruntvig emphasized the importance of dialogue between teacher and student, student and student, and teacher and teacher, which he referred to as "living exchange". He encouraged learning activities which were born out of the students' own life experiences. (Folk Education Association of America) The curriculum for the residence was proposed by the faculty and negotiated with the students. In many case, adjustments were made on the spot such as when the doctoral students expressed the need for a writing day with no structured curriculum or when the online students asked for time to discuss their concerns with the technology.

**Informal Learning** Although the content of the residential workshops is critical, the value of the informal learning that is possible when people are living together for twenty four hours a day is significant. Harrison Owen ( 1997) teaches about "open space technology" which is based on a concept that the spontaneous corridor conversations that occur in between sessions at a conference often lead to learning opportunities that are as rich as what happens in the formal sessions. Similarly, Mealman (1993) found that much incidental learning occurred for students in a degree program that was not attributed to the course content itself. This dynamic is magnified during a residential workshop where the usual time boundaries of "being in class" do not exist. Learning took place during evening social activities in coffee house and pubs, under trees, by the water, on porch steps, during shared meals, at the computer lab, and in people's rooms late into the night. As one participant related:

> I found that hallway conversations about what we had all been talking about enriched me in terms of my own thinking so that by the time those two weeks were over and I handed in both my life history as well as the critical reflection paper, they were a lot richer than they would have been had I not been through this experience, had I just come on a day to day basis and gone home. A lot of insights that I got into my own thinking I got through conversations with others and not necessarily within the context of structured learning but outside of that.

## Linking Research to Practice - and Back Again

The residential learning experience has high potential for fostering collaborative learning in a supportive community by allowing the participants the opportunity to fully immerse themselves into an environment that transcends the boundaries of time and space found in a typical college classroom. Supportive relationships are developed that sustain participants in times when physical proximity is not possible. Intentional learning experiences can be structured by faculty to allow for group cohesion, while opportunities for informal and incidental learning abound.

One unique feature of a residential experience is that when people live together they get to know one another beyond the intellectual and social realms usually experienced during two hour or four hour or even all day class sessions. During these times it is easy to hide behind a facade, sharing only aspects of oneself that one wants the group to know about. It is almost impossible to keep up this facade over an extended time period. Learning becomes more holistic, often taking on emotional and spiritual dimensions as people share honestly from the heart region. At times the shadow side becomes visible and often conflict occurs. The conflict is healthy in that it contributes to the growth of the group as well as the individuals. Because the student population tends to be diverse, participants often have the opportunity to live with others across the borders of race, religion and ethnicity, perhaps for the first time.

The benefits of residential learning have implications for adult education far beyond higher education. We live in a communal society. Much of what can be accomplished for the good of the people and the good of the planet requires a cooperative spirit. Residential learning is an intense and effective way of fostering community and trust among groups of individuals who have important work to accomplish together whether it is in the university, the corporation, on a farm or individuals working together on a community project. In the Danish folk schools, the residential setting was a way of building community and fostering trust between the students and staff, and especially among the students themselves. For Gruntvig, participation and interaction on the part of the students was essential. The engagement of the students with the staff and into inquiry into the "questions of life" were primary to what ever else was learned. (Patterson & Wilson 1974) "Gruntvig believed that a dialogue between equals had a 'mystical effect' in its power to educate the spirit. The freedom to converse and learn from others in a supportive communal atmosphere became for Gruntvig, the cornerstone of his educational theory." (Foucault-Mohammed, 1989 p. 31)

Through the residential learning programs described in this paper, Gruntvig's theory was put to the test. Participants gained knowledge and understanding that went far beyond what they would have experienced in a traditional class. This topic has wide ranging implications for research. Participation in these residential workshops has actually been a form of action research where the nature, process and outcomes of the experience continue to be studied by both faculty and students. Some potential directions for research that would inform practitioners about residential learning include: studying factors contributing to retention in online learning programs, perceptions of group cohesiveness following residential learning experiences in both online and face to face groups, and uncovering the potential for learning outside of formal class sessions. The power and potential of residential learning for building a spirit of community to accomplish goals among groups and create change in society at large, needs to continue to be explored.

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# Self-Directed Professional Development in the Continuing Education of Adult Educators

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**Abstract** - This paper reports the findings of a study to clarify the perceptions of MSU Extension staff in the area of self-directed professional development as related to the Core Competency Initiative. Data from the study are being used to identify areas of concern related to self-directed professional development, clarify needed areas of support and to establish a baseline for future examination of change.

**Background** - Michigan State University Extension began an initiative in 1993 to significantly strengthen the organization's commitment to the professional development of the adult educators who comprise the majority of the staff. The focus of this professional development effort was in the area of core competency development - the development of skill sets that were shared by all extension educators, regardless of an individuals particular content-area focus.

This paper reports on a study conducted to clarify the perceptions of MSU Extension staff in the area of self-directed professional development related to the Core Competency Initiative. Data from the study are being used to identify areas of concern in self-directed professional development, clarify needed areas of support and to establish a baseline for future examination of change.

In addition to the variety of staff training experiences that have always been made available, there now is an emerging recognition that the individual staff member plays a very significant and essential role in his/her own professional development. This enhanced view of the development of the extension educator, one that places the educator at the very center of his/her own professional development, is consistent with the expectation that extension educators view themselves in ways very similar to the ways in which they view the very learners that they are working with.

**The Research Study** - The research study was conducted during September/October 1998. This paper describes the findings from this study in relation to the extension educator's length of experience. It is expected that another data set will be collected after a period of two to three years to assess changes that may have occurred through the implementation of a variety of interventions to support self-directed professional development of MSU Extension staff.

**Instrumentation** - A mailed survey instrument was used for the study. The survey instrument was limited in size, consisting of two sides of a single sheet of paper including the cover letter. It took no more 10 minutes to complete and wasdesigned as a self-mailer. The instrument consisted of 13 questions. A combination of question formats was used - 5 point rating scales, binary response forms, open-ended comments, and fill-in response forms. Survey response was anonymous. Descriptive statistics were used for analysis of the data.

**Population** - The population for the study consisted of all 657 staff members of Michigan State University Extension. No sampling of the population was used and the study can be considered a census survey. A period of one month was allowed for receipt of completed surveys. A total of 337 surveys were returned prior to the cutoff date indicating a 51.3% response rate. Of the returned surveys, 18 (5%) were eliminated as unusable due to missing information. Data analysis was conducted on a total of 319 usable surveys.

**Analysis of Data** - Respondents were asked to identify their extension educator experience in years. Table 1 shows the experience of the respondents by role and for the total group.

**Table 1 - How long have you been with MSU Extension?**

| | |
|---|---|
| County Extension Director | 15.5 years |
| Campus Specialist | 14.6 years |
| Other | 10.1 years |
| Agent/Educator | 7.9 years |
| **Total** | **10.5 years** |

The mean experience of the total respondent group was 10.5 years (SD = 8.3 years). Of the three major respondent groups, the County Extension Director group had the greatest average experience with 15.5 years, the Campus Specialist group was next with 14.6 years, and the Agent/Educator group had the lowest average experience with 7.9 years.

Experience was used as the independent variable in the analysis. There was defined a High Experience Group, one or more standard deviations above the experience mean, and a Low Experience Group, one or more standard deviations below the experience mean.

**Question #1** on the survey asked the respondents to indicate how familiar they were with the Core Competency Initiative. A five point rating scale with 5 indicating"Very Familiar" and 1 indicating "Unfamiliar" was used. These data are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 - Respondent Experience and**
**"How familiar are you with MSU Extension's Core Competency Initiative?"**

| **Experience Group** | **Mean Rating** | **Number of Cases** |
|---|---|---|
| High Experience Group (>19 years) | 3.28* | 66 |
| Low Experience Group (<2 years) | 1.97* | 64 |

** Significantly different at <.05 (t-score = -5.75, P-value = .000)*

The High Experience Group has a mean rating of 3.28 and the Low Experience Group has a mean rating of 1.97. A t test shows this difference as significant at <.05.

**Question #2** on the survey asked the respondents to indicate how familiar they were with the set of computer programs called *The Extension Educator*. This is a set of three computer programs -*C-CAP*, *Learn-R*, and *ABC's* - that provide a foundation for the Core Competency Initiative and have been distributed throughout the organization to assist staff in their self-directed professional development. A five point rating scale with 5 indicating"Very Familiar" and 1 indicating "Unfamiliar" was used. Table 3 shows the data for Question #2.

**Table 3 - Respondent Experience and**
**"How familiar are you with the set of computer programs called *The Extension Educator*"**

| Experience Group | Mean Rating | Number of Cases |
|---|---|---|
| High Experience Group (>19 years) | 2.70* | 67 |
| Low Experience Group (<2 years) | 2.06* | 64 |

* *Significantly different at <.05 (t-score = -2.52, P-value = .013)*

The High Experience Group has a mean rating of 2.70 and the Low Experience Group has a mean rating of 2.06. A t test indicates that these differences are significant at <.05. Though the group that has been with MSU Extension the longest, the High Experience Group, is significantly more familiar with *The Extension Educator* than the group that has been with MSU Extension the shortest amount of time, both mean ratings are below the arithmetic mean of the rating scale indicating a below average familiarity with *The Extension Educator*.

**Question #3** on the survey asked the respondents to indicate if they had ever used the Core Competency Assessment Program (C-CAP). Three options were permitted for responses "Yes", "No", and "Don't Remember". The data were analyzed based upon the number of "Yes" responses. Table 4 shows the data for Question #3.

**Table 4 Respondent Experience and**
**"Have you ever used the Core Competency Assessment Program (C-CAP)?**

| Experience group | Percentage Who Have Used C-CAP |
|---|---|
| High Experience Group (>19 years) | 37.3% |
| Low Experience Group (<2 years) | 20.3% |

A greater percentage of the High Experience Group (37.3%) indicate they have used C-CAP than the Low Experience Group (20.3%). However, neither group shows half or more of the respondents as reporting that they have used C-CAP.

**Question #4** on the survey asked respondents how familiar they were with the lending library of professional development materials. These materials are loaned to MSU Extension staff regardless of their geographic location. A periodic one page *Update*bulletin is sent which highlights materials in the collection. A five point rating scale with 5 indicating "Very Familiar" and 1 indicating "Unfamiliar" was used. Table 5 shows the data for Question #4.

**Table 5 Respondent Experience and**
**"Are you familiar with the lending library of professional developmentmaterials that are available to MSUE staff (*Learn-R*materials)?"**

| Experience Group | Mean Rating | Number of Cases |
|---|---|---|
| High Experience Group (>19 years) | 2.82 | 66 |
| Low Experience Group (<2 years) | 2.60 | 64 |

The High Experience Group has a mean rating of 2.82 and the Low Experience Group a mean rating of 2.60. A t test does not indicate a significant difference between the two means. Both experience groupings have a rating below the 3.0 arithmetic mean of the rating scale indicating both groups have less than average familiarity with the library of professional development materials.

**Question #5** on the survey asked the respondents their opinion regarding the potential effect of core competency development on MSU Extension as an organization. A five point rating scale with 5 indicating "Will have great effect on MSUE"and 1 indicating "Will have little effect on MSUE" was used. Table 6 shows the data for Question #5.

**Table 6 Respondent Experience and**
**"To what degree do you feel that providing support/encouragement to staff in core competency development will have a marked effect on the MSUE organization?**

| Experience Group | Mean Rating | Number of Cases |
|---|---|---|
| Low Experience Group (<2 years) | 3.70* | 53 |
| High Experience Group (>19 years) | 3.23* | 64 |

** Significantly different at <.05 (t-score = 2.284, P-value = .024)*

The Low Experience Group has a mean rating of 3.70 and the High Experience Group a mean rating of 3.23. A t test does not indicate a significant difference between the two means. Though the Low Experience group is higher, both groups have mean ratings that are above the 3.0 arithmetic mean of the rating scale and indicate an above average opinion that support/ encouragement in core competency development will have a positive effect on MSUE.

**Question #6** on the survey asked the respondents their opinion regarding how important to their success in MSU Extension was their own continuing professional development. A five point rating scale with 5 indicating "Extremely important" and 1 indicating "Not at all important" was used. Table 7 shows the data for Question #6.

**Table 7 - Respondent Experience and**
**"How important to your success in MSU Extension is your own continuing professional development?"**

| Experience Group | Mean Rating | Number of Cases |
|---|---|---|
| Low Experience Group (<2 years) | 4.47 | 64 |
| High Experience Group (>19 years) | 4.41 | 66 |

The Low Experience Group has a mean rating of 4.47 and the High Experience Group has a mean rating of 4.41. A t test does not indicate a significant difference between the two means. Both groups have mean ratings that are considerably higher than the 3.0 arithmetic mean of the rating scale and indicate a very strong opinion that individual success in MSU Extension is dependent upon one's own continuing professional development.

**Question #7** asked for the respondents' opinion about whether they would turn to a colleague for assistance in core competency development. A five point rating scale with 5 indicating "Absolutely" and 1 indicating "Never" was used. Table 8 shows the data for Question #7.

**Table 8 - Respondent Experience and**
**"Would you turn to a colleague in MSU Extension for assistance in developing your core competencies?"**

| Experience Group | Mean Rating | Number of Cases |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Low Experience Group (<2 years) | 4.31* | 61 |
| High Experience Group (>19 years) | 3.78* | 64 |

** Significantly different at <.05 (t-score = 3.17, P-value = .002)*

The High Experience Group has a mean rating of 3.28 and the Low Experience Group has a mean rating of 1.97. A t test shows this difference as significant at <.05.

The Low Experience Group has a mean rating of 4.31 and the High Experience Group has a mean rating of 3.78. A t test shows this difference as significant at <.05. Both groups have mean ratings that are considerably higher than the 3.0 arithmetic mean of the rating scale and indicate a strong opinion that staff would turn to a colleague for assistance in developing core competencies.

**Question #8** asked "What do you find are the most effective ways for you to continue your own professional development?" A total of 227 responses were made to this open-ended question. Table 9 presents the data for the primary response categories as identified through the data. A "strong preference" is defined as a category identified by more than 50% of the experience group. A "preference" is defined as a category identified by more than 20% of the experience group.

**Table 9 - Respondent Experience and**
**"What do you find are the most effective ways**
**for you to continue your own professional development?"**

| **Response Category** | **Group** | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Low Experience % identifying (N)** | **High Experience % identifying (N)** |
| In-service training, workshops, seminars | ***71.4% (35)*** | **43.8% (21)** |
| Reading, written materials | **20.4% (10)** | **20.8% (10)** |
| Networking, informal discussion, professional interaction, colleagues | 18.3% (9) | 12.5% (6) |
| State, regional, national conferences | 14.3% (7) | **31.3% (15)** |
| Formal classes, graduate studies, college courses | 10.2% (5) | 8.3% (4) |
| Self study | 6.1% (3) | 10.4% (5) |
| Non-MSUE seminars, workshops, programs | 4.1% (2) | 12.5% (6) |

A *strong preference* for "In-service training, workshops, seminars" as a most effective way to continue their own professional development is indicated by the Low Experience Group. The High Experience Group also identifies the same item but as a *preference* (not as a *strong preference*). Both experience groups identify "Reading, written materials" as a *preference* and the High Experience Group also identifies "State, regional, national conferences" as a *preference*.

**Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

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The purpose of the study was to establish baseline understandings of the opinions and preferences of MSU Extension staff in relation to the Core Competency Initiative and self-directed professional development.

The following are major findings of this study and related conclusions and recommendations:

**Finding A1** - Staff of MSU Extension view the providing of support/encouragement in the area of core competency development will have a marked effect on the organization.

**Finding A2** - Newer MSU Extension staff are significantly more positive about the organizational effect of providing support/encouragement in the area of core competency development.

**Conclusion A** - Supporting and encouraging MSU Extension staff to improve their core competence, especially new staff, will have a marked effect on the organization.

**Recommendation A** - There should be clearly defined programs targeted for MSU Extension staff, especially new staff, that will assist in the improvement of core competencies.

**Finding B1** - Staff of MSU Extension view the area of continuing professional development as essential to their success in the organization.

**Conclusion B** - MSU Extension staff exhibit a strong sense of professionalism through their recognition of the importance of their continuing professional development.

**Recommendation B** - Programs that strengthen professionalism in MSU Extension (professional associations, participation at professional meetings, meaningful research in content area specialization, and regular reading of relevant journals) should be encouraged.

**Finding C** - The newest members of the MSU Extension organization are significantly more likely to turn to colleagues for assistance in developing their own core competencies than are those MSU Extension staff who have been with the organization for a long period of time.

**Recommendation C** - Their should be continuing and enhanced support for a New Staff Orientation Program, mentoring programs and other programs that bring new MSU Extension staff together to develop collegial relationships.

**Finding D** - "In-service training, workshops, seminars" are seen by all MSU Extension staff as the most effective ways for continuing their professional development.

**Recommendation D** - MSU Extension should continue to support professional development through the offering of in-service training, workshops, and seminars. In addition, special funding should be continued to assist staff in their involvement in such programs.

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# Exploring the Theory and Practice of Feminist Business

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the simultaneous interaction of research, theory and practice as a means of developing new knowledge in a cross disciplinary area that has received little previous attention - feminist business. The social and economic importance of the subject matter is discussed. An in-progress extended case method of research is presented with multi-dimensional loops of research to practice to research.

## Feminist Business: The Economic and Social Implications

The entrance of women into the workplace and their subsequent exit from the workplace, especially from larger corporations in the United States in the twentieth century, has had significant economic and societal impacts. While findings of studies show varying results about the specific attrition rate of women in the workplace, they generally agree that women are leaving at much greater rates than men. Government and private research support the thinking that the number of women leaving a work setting to pursue other employment options appears to be substantial and long lived.

Turnover like this impacts the bottom line of organizations. Replacing and training employees has large direct costs as wellas indirect costs such as interrupted projects and loss of sales in the transition period. The ultimate impact may be the loss of valuable intellectual capital and workplace diversity. Organizations can continue to put resources into recruiting and training employees, specifically women, but if they are not retained, and if their advancement is not realized, the organization will not receive the benefits of its investment. Even more importantly, when women are notjust tolerated, but celebrated, their unique perspectives, styles and approaches can add value to the organization in multiple ways.

These trends have implications for organizations concerned about the retention of women employees. They also have implications for women and men starting businesses who may want alternative models to consider as they build them.

Historically the attempt to retain women has taken the form of two approaches. One has been to train women to conform to the existing structures of traditional business. These attempts have included education and training from areas such as dress code and navigating the established formal and informal networks to golf lessons. The other approach has been to institute token, non-integrated measures such as affirmative action plans and sexual harassment policies. These have tended to be isolated attempts at retaining women but have not been a strategic or planful element of a whole system or culture.

This paper examines theory and practice in a third approach: feminist business, which includes examining the underlying values and principles of an organization to make systemic change.
This approach has to do with systematically integrating women's values, ideas and styles into the fundamental principles and operations of the organization for the benefit of women as well as men and the organization a whole. "...As these attributes of feminine culture are brought into the workplace, they are providing a much-needed balance to what has been a predominantly male environment, and slowly but steadily they are eroding some of the obsolete practices and prejudices that have dehumanized work and the work environment." (Lenz, 1985, p. 48).

The theory and practice of feminism has generally kept its distance from the field of business, considering it mercenary, manipulative and tainted. The theory and practice of business has generally distanced itself from the field of feminism, viewing it as impractical, unscientific, and a burden to efficiency.

In the area of research, the importance of feminist business is magnified by the fact that so little research has been conducted. Much research is available about women fitting into current business models and about changing isolated business policies to address the needs of women, but little work has been done in the area of changing the organizational system to better fit the individuals. A literature search in each of the fields of business and feminism reveals little blending of the disciplines.

In the area of practice there are a few models available. They are isolated geographically and in time. The practice of feminist business is typically in isolation from other practitioners and without the benefit of practical or theoretical models. These instances are not currently being analyzed or used as an opportunity for theory building.

## Connecting Theory and PracticeThrough Research

This study uses the extended case method, a theory building method of research with qualitative sources to confirm or extend an initial theory. It involves "...(re)constructing theory out of data collected through participant observation." (Burawoy, et. al, p. 271.) Significance is defined in terms of societal and personal measures rather than statistical ones.

In this study, theory is defined with a distinctly feminist orientation. Mansbridge identifies it as "street theory," a "fluid and continually evolving body of meanings" that comes from practice. (Mansbridge, p. 29). In this case the "street theory" of feminist business comes from the researcher's practice in the form of ten years of personal experience and observation in a self-described feminist business, Minnesota Women's Press, Inc.

Several features of a qualitative approach, as described by McMillan are consistent with a feminist approach. It is holistically assumed that the environment influences behavior and should be included. The phenomenon is observed in context, in its entirety, in its natural settings. The researcher is a participant observer in direct interaction with the participants as an extension of the environment. A participant observer gains a very

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different perspective than an outsider observing. She is both participant and observer, both practitioner and theorizer.

In addition, the perspectives of the participants are sought in order to create meaning. Their behavior is not just observed, but the participants' ideas and feelings are sought out. Rich narrative descriptions are important. The intent is to produce descriptions that cannot be produced only with numerals. A process orientation is important to wanting to know how and why behavior occurs, not just whether it occurs. An emergent research design is used, beginning the study with "*some* idea about what data will be collected and the procedures that will be employed, but a full account of the methods is done *retrospectively*, after all the data have been collected." (McMillan, p. 241.)

## Initial Theory

Using the model of the extended case study, the beginning is an initial theory. In this study the initial theory was

1. Feminist business exists in practice.
2. The ends and means of feminist businesses are different from businesses in general.
3. The ends and means of feminist businesses aredifferent from women-owned businesses.
4. A common definition of feminist business will emerge.

The definitions of feminism are multiple. For this reason, there is not one single definition assumed in the beginning. A definition of business, while seeming less controversial, also has multiple perspectives. For this study's purposes, business is defined broadly and inclusively as an organization that engages in commercial enterprise with one of its goals being profitability.

## Research Tools

In this study, multiple research approaches are used as a method of triangulation. Several means of observations are used to see how or whether they confirm the initial theory.

### *Literature Review*

A review of academic and popular literature found vast writings by and about women in business. With the growth of small businesses owned, operated and managed by women, much has been written about this phenomenon. Generally, they do not have the focus of this paper's definition of feminist business. They are women in business, but generally using the same foundational and operational models as traditional, mainstream business. There is no lack of research and writing about business and feminism independently, but little about the intersection of the two fields. Some feminist organizational literature can be adapted to the context of business.

### *Focus Groups*

Four two-hour focus groups were conducted. Participants were drawn from four different groups of women with an interest in business and/or feminism. All owned a business, were employed in a business or had retired from employment in a business. Some were self-described feminists, others were not. All supported equal rights for women. Their experiences with business ranged from very positive to very negative.

### *Reading and Discussion Groups*

Two monthly, ten-person reading and discussion groups are meeting over a period of six months. At the date of this writing, each of them has met three times each. To obtain participants, ads were run in a feminist publication and notices were sent to local women's business organizations for inclusion in their newsletters. A nominal fee was required for participation. The participants were self selected as being interested in both business and feminism. The participants represent a diversity of age, race,socio economic status, educational level and range of business experience. The readings for each session were selected from the results of the literature search and include non-fiction business and organizational histories, essays, research journal articles and a critical examination of the use of biography. The readings are a stimulus and starting point for the discussion about feminist business. With this research group, the study of published research simultaneous with discussion of practices in feminist business will lead to building new models for practice and new theory. Research and practice each informs the other. It is expected that the participants' insights will identify both commonalities and differences in the patterns, challenges, successes and issues related to the application of feminist business around the context of the selected readings.

### *Email Discussion Group*

An email discussion group has been created among the twenty members of the reading and discussion groups. This allows continued conversation to take place outside of the two hours each month when the participants are in face-to-face conversation. Consistent with the nature of the medium, postings have included impulsive insights as well as thoughtful reflections.

### *Oral History*

An oral history of Minnesota Women's Press, Inc. is in process. This business claims as a part of its mission a "transforming feminist worldview [that] celebrates, honors and promotes women's words, experiences and values, in the belief that doing so is the foundation for individual, social and cultural transformation." As a part of the oral history, about 40 individuals are being interviewed for 1-2 hours each. They include the founders, early staff members and volunteers, other key staff people over the fourteen years, advisory board members, clients, shareholders, customers and current staff. Categories of interview questions include those specific to the individual's involvement with the business as well as general business, feministbusiness and feminist definitions, impact beyond the organization itself and personal stories. The taped and transcribed interviews will be housed at the Minnesota Historical Society. Analyses of the transcriptions will be published in spring 2000.

### *Written Survey*

Two written surveys are planned. The first, to be conducted in September 1999, will be brief and open ended in order to invite a wide range of respondents and responses. It will be conducted with local and national businesses that have been identified as possible feminist businesses. Characteristics for selection were compiled from two analyses of feminist organizations (Martin, Knopoff & Beckman, 1998; Yancy Martin, 1990). The feminist principles identified in the analyses are also supported by the research of Wilson Schaef (1981). These businesses have been compiled through database searches, examinations of articles and advertisements in back issues of both feminist and business news publications, a local women's directory and personal suggestions. The survey will also be posted in a web site, distributed to participants in the focus groups and discussion groups and printed in a 40,000 circulation newspaper.

The second survey will be a more detailed follow up with participants in the first interview who have indicated their willingness to respond again. Specific questions will determined partially by information collected in the initial survey

## Findings

This is a study in progress. Given the four components of the original theory, some initial findings follow. In keeping with the nature of the study, the research to date is being used to both inform practice and shape future research. At times these intermediate discoveries are best exemplified in the words of the participants themselves. Their own stories of their practice, which becomes their theory building link, with them as participants and observers are the best reflection of research to practice. Comments in addition to those included below can be viewed at www.womenspress.com.

### *Findings Around #1: Feminist Business Exists in Practice*

The search of the literature confirmed distinctly feminist practices in general organizational settings that are assumed to transfer to the business organizational setting. In particular Yancy Martin has characteristics for each of 10 dimensions of feminist organizations: ideology, values, goals, outcomes, circumstances, structure, practices, members and membership, scope and scale and external relations. (1990). Martin, Knopoff and Beckman discuss characteristics of 11 dimensions of traditional, normative and feminist types of organizations: emphasis on hierarchy, division of labor, employment based on expertise, jobs segregated by gender, leadership style, control, concentration of decision-making, emphasis on competition, rules related to work behavior, acceptability of emotional expression and separation of work and private life.

The literature also uncovered documentation, both autobiographical and biographical, of feminist businesses and feminist business practices. A number of these accounts were used as reading materials in the reading and discussion groups.

In the course of the focus groups, in-person and email discussion groups, and oral history, it became apparent that feminist business practices did exist. Women employees and business owners shared stories of an application of feminism to business practices. While acknowledging its existence, the participants acknowledged the lack of theory and scarcity of practice: "I'm hungry for exploration of that question," one commented.

### *Findings Around #2: The Ends and Means of Feminist Businesses are Different from Business in General*

The literature review reveled case studies of deliberate efforts by feminist business practitioners to utilize methods and end results that were in contrast to typical business practices. The focus and discussion groups participants shared their own experiences in that practice.

There was much discussion about ends and means. "Could a company that has a flexible, woman-centered work environment, a day care center and liberal parental leave but makes land mines be a feminist business?" Several of the readings in the discussion groups and much of the discussion focused on a case study of a national feminist publication that editorially was a leader on women's issues (ends), but compromised its core values in response to external pressures and at times abused its own staff (means). Both ends and means were seen as critical.

A member of the list serv discussion commented, "I'd wish us to entertain some new models where we can be honoring our feminist values in the ends and in the means of our businesses and be prospering in the bottom line in spite of, and because of, those feminist values. "

A member of a focus group commented, "We are going through a redefinition of work and it is women who have pushed this."

### *Findings Around #3: The Ends and Means of Feminist Businesses are Different from Women-Owned Businesses*

To date, participants have generally recognized that merely being woman-owned or woman-managed does not in and of itself make it a feminist business. "Business as usual" is not changed by the technicality of ownership or management. It must be "based on a different set of values."
"If a business is owned by a woman that does things for women but is run in traditional business patterns, is it really a feminist business?"

One participant in a focus group is a business consultant with an organization helping women with start-up businesses. She acknowledged that their work has to do with seeing businesswomen be successful, but not on any different terms. "We don't view women in business as different from men in business; most are just struggling to survive; as a business consultant, I want to understand the distinction between feminist business and women-owned business: does a feminist business have to be about women, or is it a way of being?"

### *Findings Around #4: A Common Definition of Feminist Business Will Emerge*

The literature review revealed a wide range of definitions of feminism as well as recognition of that diversity of thinking.

This part of the theory has not been upheld at this point in the study. It was obvious early on that there would be multiple definitions of feminist business. As there are multiple definitions of feminism, there is an even wider range of definitions of feminist business. It is too early in the research process to identify the similarities and differences of those definitions.

Though not one singular definition, an analysis of notes taken of the discussions yielded four major areas of discussion.

A. Process orientation of means
One area would identify feminist business as having a process oriented style that included clear and open communication, mutual respect for individuals, the acceptance of emotions in the workplace and flexibility. This identified the means to the end as being important.

B. Value driven ends
A second area identified values driven ends as important, that in addition to being profitable, end goals would include balance, passion and a socially responsible end product or service.

C. "Zen"
A third area of discussion could be labeled "Zen." It included consideration for whole persons in a whole business.

D. Feasibility
The fourth area of discussion by these groups was feasibility. It raised questions about whether a feminist orientation to business would be an asset or a hindrance, whether it would help a business to be "successful," depending in how that is defined, or would be an obstacle. Could a feminist business make it?

Other groupings of comments included the importance of mission, lack of hierarchy, a collaborative/cooperative environment, sense of community, honoring the strength in diversity and creativity and an openness to learning and evolution.

## Research to Practice Continues

Each of the 4 components of the initial theory will receive further examination. In particular, additional research is needed in the distinction of ends and means and definitions. How do the ends and means in the practice of feminist business vary from traditional business and from each other? What models and further theory can we build from the observation of these practices?

A participant in a discussion group said, "I know what feminist is not, but not what it is.

I'm so surrounded by the male models, that I don't necessarily see the female models. It would be interesting to come up with models of the dynamics of feminists in business; our only model now is the traditional business world." Another participant worded it, "We want alternative models that are different from traditional ways of doing business."

Themes identified as areas for further study include power, collaboration, leadership, communication and community, competition and collaboration, creativity, process orientation and expression of emotions. In the continuing links from research to theory to practice to research, these areas will be addressed in an additional reading and discussion group, the email discussion group, the first and second written surveys and the continuation of the oral history.

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The author thanks Kathryn Brewer for her exceptionally helpful input.

Presented at the Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education, U of Missouri, St. Louis, September 22-24, 1999.

# Urban Workforce Development:
# A Collaborative Planning Framework For Improving Basic Skills

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## Abstract

This paper employed a multi-frame theoretical approach to organizational leadership to describe and analyze the processes involved in developing and operating a collaborative community-based Workplace Learning Center.

While sustained economic growth as well as increases in new machinery and equipment for all firms require continual enhancement of workers'skills, the amount and type of education and training provided tends to vary by the size of the business. For example, a telephone survey of 1,288 businesses in 1992 found that small businesses tend to hire more less-educated and inexperienced workers, and provide them with general skills and training (Black, et al. 1993). The amount of training provided to such employees does not increase with firm size because larger firms appear to prefer hiring and providing firm-specific training to more experienced and educated workers (Black, et al. 1993). Also, these researchers found that small firms provide less training to new hires and they are less likely to provide remedial training than are large firms.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) defines a small business as one with up to 500 employees for most manufacturing and mining industries and $5.0 million in average receipts for most nonmanufacturing industries (Office of Advocacy, U.S. SBA, 1999). In 1996, these businesses employed 53 percent of the private work force, contributed 47 percent of all sales in the country, produced 50 percent of the private gross domestic product, and produced an estimated 75 percent of the 2.5 million new jobs created during 1995 (Office of Advocacy, U.S. SBA, 1999). Of small firm workers, 53.7 percent had a high school education or less, compared to 44.3 percent of large firm workers in 1996.

For all businesses, training is an expensive proposition. For example, in 1998 U.S. organizations with over 100 employees spent over $60.7 billion on training--a 26 percent increase since 1993 (Training Magazine, 1999), and apparently small organizations cannot afford the same level of investment. This observation is particularly problematic in urban settings where low-literate workers are most likely to be concentrated, and where small businesses thereby find it difficult to locate and hire the most highly skilled employees. This problem is exacerbated because these businesses often experience difficulty retaining their employees once they have been trained. The loss of skilled employees represent a major set-back to both the employer and the community in which both the employer and employee are located. However, there is strength in numbers and urban community agencies, small businesses, and training providers are finding it to be advantageous to pool their resources in the form of collaborative programs in order to provide valuable training opportunities for an urban workforce.

Collaborative programming offers several advantages to the participating organizations, e.g., a reduction in the duplication and fragmentation of services, an expansion of the linkages for collaboration, and the provision of a one stop location in the face of dwindling resources (Daley, et al., in press) . However, there are several challenges to developing and sustaining collaborative relationships, e.g., establishing reciprocal relationships for the mutual benefit of all partners, identifying a collaborative decision making process, organizing partnership roles and responsibilities, determining fiscal responsibility, planning for delivery of services and evaluating the results. The complex nature of collaborative relationships among multiple partners increase the possibility that they will either achieve limited success or end in failure. This paper utilizes Bolman and Deal's (1991) multi-frame approach to organizational leadership to describe and analyze the processes involved in developing and operating a collaborative community-based Workplace Learning Center. Bolman and Deal (1991) argue that any organization can be viewed from the perspective of four organizational frames: structural, human resources, political, and symbolic.

## The Northwest Community Development Learning Center

The project was implemented in a Mid Western city with a metropolitan residential population of over 1.4 million people. The Northwest Community Development Learning Center was established in 1997 from state workplace education incentive grant funds. It was designed as a partnership project involving a large technical college, a community based organization (i.e., the Northwest Community Development Corporation), and a consortium of small businesses in the community. The Learning Center was located at the offices of the CBO in order to meet the needs of the area business consortium and employees in the community. It sought to provide basic skills instruction to assist workers to improve their basic skills and abilities to the end of maintaining and improving their productivity, employability, and efficiency. For employers, the center sought to assist them to upgrade their workforce to meet the demands of business restructuring and new technology, and to continue their commitment to manufacturing and selling quality products in this inner-city community.

According to the 1990 census, the Northwest residential community was populated by 17,799 individuals who lived in 6,748 households and earned a median income of $27,089.00. Of the adults ages 25 and over, 69.6% were high school graduates. In terms of race/ethnicity, 40.6% were White, and 56% were African American. The majority of residents (57.4%) owned their own homes, and the median assessed value of a single-family unit was $35,500.00. The business community consisted of over eighty businesses; primarily in manufacturing and the retail trades. A total of twenty businesses responded to a survey by the technical college and CBO. It found that 61% of businesses had fewer than 100 employees and 23% had between 100 and 250; 76% had been located in the area for over 10 years; and 63% employed fewer than 10% of their workers from the community. The businesses also reported multiple reasons for their interest in training: 70% had or was planning technology upgrades; 75% planned to add new employees; 90% were adding new responsibilities to current employee's jobs; 88% had increased the quality of their products; 47% indicated turnover problems; and 45% had changed (or planned to change) their methods and processes.

## Establishing and Implementing The Collaborative Process

The planning process involved several steps. First, the educational representatives at the technical college initiated an exploratory committee comprised of representative from the college, the CBO, and the business consortium to explore opportunities for establishing an educational collaborative. Second, the technical college representative met with the business consortium. Based upon their feedback, he and representatives from the CBO distributed surveys to all of the area businesses; to which twenty businesses responded. Third, a steering committee was organized with representation from area companies, the CBO and the technical college. Its responsibility was to monitor the development and operation of the workplace education center. Fourth, with the support of the steering committee, the business council, and the CBO, the technical college submitted an application for a state-funded workplace development grant. Fifth, with funding of $30,000.00 from the state, and financial commitments from each of the business partners and the technical college, the project was launched in July of 1997.

### The Structure of the Center

Bolman and Deal (1991) define structure as an outline of the desired pattern of activities, expectations, and exchanges among executives, managers, employees, and customers or clients. They observed that the shape of the formal structure enhances or constrains what an organization is able to accomplish. This collaborative effort was planned as a relationship where each partner experienced reciprocal interdependence, that is, where the outputs of each became the inputs for others (Thompson, 1967). The Technical college identified a new market and a source of new revenue for its instructional programs and services; the CBO could attain its goals of keeping businesses and jobs in the community and increase its role in serving these businesses; and the area businesses received cost sharing for targeted educational programming, the convenience of local programming, and upgraded skills for existing and potential employees.

**Table 1.**
**Improving the Basic Skills of an Urban Workforce: A Collaborative Approach**
**Responsibility Chart**

| Tasks: Developing Collaborative Programming | CBO Admin. Team | Learning Center Steering Committee | Techn. Coll.: Techn. and Industrial Dept. | Adult Literacy Instructor | Techn. Coll.: Customized Instr. Staff | Techn Coll. Support Staff |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Needs Assessment (on going) | I/C | R | A/R | R | I/C | I |
| 2. Marketing | A | A | I/C | R | I | I |
| 3. Registration/ Enrollment | C | A/C | I/C | R | I | I |
| 4. Program/ Curricular Development | I/C | A | A/C | R | R | I |
| 5. Ordering Materials/supplies | C | R/I | A | R | I/C | R |
| 5. Collecting Fees (fiscal monitoring) | R | A/R | R | I/C | I/C | I |
| 4. Instruction | I | I | A | R | R | I |
| 7. Attendance Reporting | I | I | A | R | I | R |
| 8. Program Evaluation | I/C | I/C | A | R | R | I |

Note: A = Approve; R = Responsibility; C = Consult; I = Inform

According to Mintzberg's (1979, cited in Bolman and Deal (1991)) Model of structural configurations for organizations, the Workplace Learning Center was comprised of three sectors: the operating core, administrative core, and support staff (see Table 1 for project-related roles and responsibilities). The Operating Core was comprised of the adult literacy instructor and the technical college customized instructional staff who performed the basic work of the organization, i.e., needs assessment surveys, marketing within the business community, registration and enrollment, basic skills programming and customized curricular development, ordering materials and supplies, delivering instruction, reporting attendance, and program/class evaluation. The learning center programs were comprised of the following: basic skills (GED Prep, high school completion, basic shop math); computer literacy (computer applications, computer aided instruction); applied workplace communications (group dynamics, interpersonal skills); customized training (tailored for businesses, contracted for services).

The Administrative Core consisted of the technical college representative who served as a middle manager and supervised, controlled, and provided resources for the operating core; and both the Learning Center Steering Committee and the CBO administrative team served as top-level managers at the strategic apex. They created the mission and provided strategic direction for the project. The Support Staff were provided by both the technical college and the CBO administrative team. They performed tasks, such as marketing, attendance reporting, ordering materials and supplies, etc., that indirectly facilitated the work of the operating core.

Bolman and Deal (1991) suggest that vertical coordination occurs when people at higher levels coordinate and control the work of subordinates. For this project, vertical coordination was achieved via the a chain of command reporting relationship between the technical college representative and the literacy instructor. The established rules, policies, and standard operating procedures of the technical college were followed by the literacy instructor. Also, lateral coordination is an important function for collaborative projects (Rosenberg, 1997). It occurs when those at similar levels respond to one another faceto-face (Bolman and Deal (1991). Such lateral communications for this project took place through formal and informal meetings that were organized by the technical college representative.

**The Leadership of the Center**

Administrative leadership for the project was provided by the technical college representative. His style of leadership could be characterized as "soft" Theory X (Bolman and Deal, 1991). Soft Theory X is a permissive style that tries to avoid conflict and satisfy everyone's needs. It may produce superficial harmony but leads to apathy and indifference and causes people to expect more and more while giving less and less, and thereby create self-fulfilling prophesies. As the project was implemented, the leadership shifted to the director of the CBO. His style of leadership tended to be "hard" Theory X . Hard Theory X emphasizes coercion, tight controls, threats, and punishments; it results in low productivity, antagonism, militant unions, and subtle sabotage (Bolman and Deal, 1991). It also leads to the creation of self-fulfilling prophesies.

Bolman and Deal (1991) also identified interpersonal competence as an important attribute of leaders and managers. They cited research by Argyris (1962) that showed managers' effectiveness was often impaired because they were over controlling, excessively competitive, uncomfortable with feelings, and closed to ideas other than their own. For this project, the approach to interpersonal interactions were dominated by either the accommodative approach of the technical college representative which was "high inquiry" and "low advocacy," ( i.e., seeking to learn the thoughts/feelings of others, but failing to communicate his thoughts/feelings) or the assertive approach of the CBO director, which was "high advocacy" with "low inquiry," (i.e., telling others what he thought but failing to inquire about their thoughts/feelings).

### The Politics of the Center

Bolman and Deal (1991) argue that organizations are "alive and screaming" political arenas that house a complex variety of individuals and interest groups. They observe that in the face of enduring differences and scarce resources, conflict among members of a coalition is inevitable and power inevitably becomes a key resource. These observations were prophetic for the collaborative Learning Center partnership. Each partnership organization operated as a coalition that had different objectives and resources. Each attempted to bargain with the others in order to influence the operations of the project. Although authority for the project rested with the technical college representative, the other members of the collaborative had access to other forms of power. For example, ten businesses paid membership fees that ranged from $500.00 for businesses with 100 or fewer employees, to $1,500.00 for businesses with 200 to 500 employees. In exchange, these businesses received membership on the steering committee and a reduction of $10.00 in tuition per employee trained at the center. Ten other businesses paid tuition at a rate of $85.00 per employee to gain access to center training. As the project evolved, business representatives pursued a united agenda of bargaining for a reduction in outreach training costs, i.e., they offered funding support to the Learning Center in exchange for a reduction in the cost of customized training, e.g., welding, blueprint reading, etc.

The Workforce Development Division (a fee-based program) of the technical college sought to recover enough revenue in fees to justify their investment in the project. The total project costs were set at $85,000.00. The state incentive grant contributed $30,000.00 of this amount. Therefore, the technical college hoped to retrieve $55,000.00 in revenue from a contractual relationship with the CBO. Several invoices were thereby sent to the director of the CBO. However, the director challenged the $55,000.00 estimate for expenses and he argued that his organization had collected only $20,000.00 in membership dues and fees from the businesses. In addition, they had spent $30,000.00 on upgrading the facility and these dollars should be counted toward the total expenses for the project. The issue was resolved when the Vice President of the college intervened and negotiated a settlement. The college forgave the CBO for the project's first year expenses and asked it to develop a plan for generating revenue for the next year. After this exchange, the director of the CBO effectively took over the leadership of the project and the technical college reduced its visibility.

### The Symbolism of the Center

Symbolism in organizations connote meaning, belief, and faith. Symbols such as rituals, myths, fairy tales, stories, ceremonies and others are particularly important to assist us to cope with confusion, uncertainty, and chaos (Bolman and Deal, 1991). The Learning Center represented a powerful symbol to the partnership organizations, however, the meaning of the relationship varied among the entities involved. The CBO viewed it as one of several efforts to revive the inner-city through "community reinvestment. It was a shining example of the CBOs value to the community and demonstrated for all to see its ability to retain businesses and expand employment opportunities for its inner-city residents. Also, the CBO director emerged as a highly charismatic individual who spoke to the needs of the community and workers. He told stories of the CBO's fifteen year history in the community and reminded everyone of the value of the partnership. Valued for the remedial and technical knowledge and skills it could provide, the technical college viewed the Learning Center as an opportunity to obtain and strengthen its linkage with a community of over 80 small businesses and to demonstrate its good will toward the community. Through the Learning Center, it was able to develop contractual agreements with several of the individual businesses to provide customized training to employees. The businesses saw the Learning Center as a means of obtaining convenient, economical and high quality remedial, technical, and specialized training for their employees. As the project evolved, several symbols emerged to give meaning to their experience of participation. The 7:30 a.m. meetings at the Learning Center became a ritual. Once a month the steering committee gathered to discuss issues, problems, ideas and directions for the project. Several of the business representative emerged as leaders and spokespersons for the interests of the businesses. They understood the value of training and they could state this value in language that the business community understood.

## Analysis and Conclusion

Although the incentive state grant lasted only 12 months, the instructor from the technical college was actively involved in the project for 17 months. The level of success achieved from participation in the project differed for each of the partners. With class sizes of about 10 students, around 200 workers received training through the project. Program evaluations indicated high levels of student and business satisfaction (80% or better rating for customer satisfaction). However, the technical college experienced a deficit from the first year of operation and failed to renew its grant application. Although it withdrew from the Learning Center, the technical college continued to provide Customer-Based training to members of the business community.

A collaborative project of the type discussed in this case is a tremendously complex undertaking. The presentation of the case within the framework of the Bolman and Deal (1991) Model illustrated several problems such collaborative efforts face. First, given the different organizational structures, histories, traditions/cultures, and operating procedures of each type of organization (i.e., a non-profit community agency, 20 profit oriented businesses, and a fee-based division within a public technical college) the organizations failed to design and communicate an appropriate structure. For example, a project coordinator could have been appointed and a "responsibility chart" could have been negotiated and shared with all partners. Given the complexities of the structural arrangement, leadership became critically important to sustaining the project. An integrative approach to leadership and communicationwhich emphasized common goals and mutual influence in relationships; communicated openly and publicly tested assumptions and beliefs; and combined advocacy with inquiry would have been most appropriate (Bolman and Deal, 1991). In terms of organizational politics, satisfying the short and long-term needs of the various coalitions was like a high-wire balancing act. The leaders needed to develop an agenda, build a base of support for that agenda, and learn how to manage relations with those who might support or resist the agenda (Bolman and Deal, 1991). Lastly, the symbolism for the project seems to have been an "add-on." It was not managed, but allowed to evolve without appropriate attention by the project leaders. With the high level of complexity involved in this project, the symbolism could have provided the glue to sustain commitment of all partners significantly beyond the period of the initial grant.

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## The Adult Education Implications of 'Work-First' Welfare Reform Policy on Welfare Recipients: A Theoretical Approach

Roxanne T. Miller

### Abstract

For welfare recipients, the work-first emphasis of the 1996 welfare reform law has introduced the threat of five-year lifetime limits of welfare benefits and sanctions imposed for noncompliance with work requirements. These two social factors and an additional 48 negative and positive forces are identified in this paper as potentially impacting the effectiveness of education and training of welfare recipients in the current work-first political context. After explaining the key points of the welfare reform issue, this paper suggests a theoretical approach for future participation research on learning of disadvantaged adults using Harry Miller's force-field analysis of adult participation in education. The paper incorporates Malcolm Knowles' andragogical model and offers practical insights relating to philosophy and instructional approach of a new St. Louis area welfare-to-work job readiness program called WorkWays™.

### 1. Description of the Issue

*Significant shift in U.S. welfare policy.*

In August 1996, President Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). The new welfare law signaled major changes for the field of adult education. The law shifted U.S. welfare policy away from previous governmental support of adult basic and literacy education programs and toward a "work-first" approach to move welfare recipients into jobs quickly. This legislation set in motion policies impacting millions who receive welfare benefits.

One result of the new federal emphasis is that adult educators may view themselves as being "caught in the middle," wanting to provide effective educational services to welfare recipients but excluded by funders if their programs cannot meet workforce development goals (Imel, 1998).

A collaborative approach by both practitioners and researchers is needed. Adult educators need to become more knowledgeable of key welfare policy issues so that they can better understand the complexities of welfare reform and be in a more strategic position to explore new educational solutions from both a research and practice point of view. Educators need to play a more active role in the planning process: partnering with governmental agencies, community organizations, educational institutions, and others at the local, state and national levels to explore innovative education and training options that will not only help welfare recipients gain necessary skills to enter and move up in the job market, but will be cost effective as well.

This is no easy task; there are no simple solutions.

One of the first steps needed is for more adult educators to become involved in active and aggressive research to identify, examine, and further develop more innovative educational and training approaches that will help welfare recipients move toward self-sufficiency.

*Key welfare reform issues.*

In the 1980s, adult basic and literacy education became linked to welfare reform (Imel, 1995). Passage of the 1988 Family Support Act (FSA) had created the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program, which *required* states to provide educational services to welfare recipients. At that time, there was a general consensus that welfare recipients were not well prepared to enter the work force (Cohen et al., as cited in Imel, 1995).

The 1996 welfare law, however, changed that, making "unprecedented changes to the nation's welfare system" (Holcomb, Pavetti, Ratcliffe, & Riedinger, 1998).

The new law eliminated both the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) entitlement program, which gave monthly cash assistance to families with little or no income, and the JOBS program. The law replaced both programs with a single block grant to the states the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which "gives states far greater flexibility to design their own cash assistance and welfare-to-work programs than was permitted in the past" (Holcomb et al., 1998).

Despite flexibility provided by TANF, the law also contains important state spending restrictions and mandates: 1) much higher participation rates in work or work-related activities for recipients than in the past, 2) the requirement that work participation rates be calculated in ways likely to increase participation in work activities and *limit participation in education or training*, 3) *an imposed work requirement on recipients after two years of receiving benefits* (which states may choose to impose sooner), and 4) *a five-year maximum lifetime limit on a family's receipt of TANF benefits* (Holcomb et al., 1998).

A key issue in the welfare reform debate of the last decade has been how best to move welfare recipients into the workforce, toward self-sufficiency, and out of poverty (Scrivener et al., 1998). Two opposing welfare-to-work approaches—"quick employment" and "building skills"—have been tested. These can be thought of as existing on opposite sides of a continuum, with additional "mixed strategy" programs—combining various elements of both approaches—in the middle of the continuum (Strawn, 1998).

Programs using the "quick employment" approach (also referred to as "work first," "labor force attachment," "jobs first," or "job search"), aim to move people to work quickly, even at low wages, "reflecting a view that welfare recipients can best build their work habits and skills in the workplace" (Scrivener et al., 1998, p. ES-5). Programs using this approach offer job search as the most common activity (Strawn, 1998).

On the other side of the continuum, skill-building programs (also known as "human capital development") emphasize education and training to build skills before employment, "based on the belief that an upfront investment in the skills levels of welfare recipients will allow them to obtain higher-paying and more secure jobs" (Scrivener et al., 1998, p. ES-5). Most of these programs offer basic education as the most common activity, which "reflects the low education levels of welfare recipients" (Strawn, 1998, p. i).

Mixed strategy programs in the middle offer a wider range of services, yet differ significantly in relative emphasis on job search or basic education as the most common activity (Strawn, 1998). In addition, some education and training providers have shifted from "traditional, sequential (education, then training, then employment) program models to more innovative ways of combining learning and work" (Strawn, 1998, p. 29).

*Welfare-to-work program evaluation findings.*

Numerous multi-state evaluations of work first, skill building and mixed strategy approaches have been conducted in the past decade (Besharov, Germanis, & Rossi, 1997; Bloom, 1999; Freedman, Mitchell, & Navarro, 1999; "Multi-state welfare," 1997; Pauly, Long, & Martinson, 1992; Scrivener et al., 1998; Strawn, 1998, 1999).

The results of California's Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program in particular influenced policy decisions leading to the 1996 welfare reform law (Strawn, 1998; Handler & Hasenfeld, 1997). Early findings showed a quick job placement approach significantly increased employment and earnings in a short time frame, while programs focused on basic education skills "had few links to employers" (Strawn, 1998, p. 4).

An analysis of research findings to date clearly shows that "the most successful programs have been found in the middle of the job search to basic education continuum, with mixed strategies of employment and skill building services" (Strawn, 1998, p. 2).

Two-year results of the Steps to Success program in Portland, Oregon, are also significant, showing it as one of the few innovative programs successfully helping recipients find *better* jobs (Scrivener et al., 1998; Strawn, 1999).

In a comparison between the Portland program and the successful GAIN program run in Riverside, California, in the late 1980s, Scrivener et al. (1998) state both were employment-focused and offered mixed services. However, Portland emphasized *job quality*, whereas Riverside "encouraged participants to take any job" (p. ES-19).

In a study of 20 years of employment and training program evaluations, Cohen and his colleagues concluded that "traditional literacy training and employment approaches have not been found to be effective with welfare recipients" and "clearly need to be fundamentally redesigned (as cited in Imel, 1995, p. 2).

*In search of a theory: Adult education models.*

Malcolm Knowles (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998) developed and applied assumptions about the adult learner to the concept of "andragogy," or "the art and science of helping adults learn." He emphasizes the natural drive of adults to learn, and his points seem especially pertinent to efforts to improve educational and training programs for welfare recipients. His andragogical model states that adults: 1) need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it; 2) have a self-concept of being responsible for their decisions and lives; 3) enter educational activity with more varied experiences than do children; 4) are ready to learn things they need to know to cope effectively with real-life situations; 5) are life-centered (or task- or problem-centered) in their orientation to learning; and 6) are more responsive to internal than external motivators (Knowles et al., 1998, pp. 64-68).

According to Merriam and Caffarella (1999), participation is one of the more thoroughly studied areas in adult education in terms of who participates, what is studied, and motivation factors. They state that no single theory or model exists in adult education that explains or predicts participation in adult education. Rather, the amount of accumulated information about participation has led to a number of "efforts to fit the pieces together in the form of models that try to convey the complexity of the phenomenon" (p. 70).

Most of the available models apply to formal learning; only a few have been tested. Merriam and Caffarella (1999, pp. 60-68) describe seven models of participation, including Miller's Force-Field Analysis (1967), one of the earliest efforts to explain participation. Miller's analysis linked Maslow's (1954) needs hierarchy with Lewin's (1947) force-field theory to predict and explain participation levels of people from four social classes (lower-lower, work, lower-middle, and upper-middle). No test studies of the model are cited by Merriam & Caffarella.

Other models described are Boshier's Congruency Model, Rubenson's Expectancy-Valence Model, Cookson's ISSTAL Model, Darkenwald and Merriam's Psychosocial Interaction Model, Henry and Besile's Decision Model, and Cross's Chain-of-Response Model (pp. 62-68).

Wikelund, Reder, & Hart-Landsberg (1992) review these same models and theories and add one of their own: the concept of "perceived opportunity structures" (p. 20), which they developed as part of qualitative research with welfare recipients in an Oregon JOBS program.

"Perceived opportunity structures" are "one's expected opportunities, control of 'fate' in making the most of them, and belief in the chances of success" that "may affect the investment people are willing to make in literacy, education, and careers" (Wikelund et al., 1992, p. 20).

After considering the theories for further participation research, Wikelund et al. (1992) reject all as insufficient (p. 24). "It may be that no single theory can represent what Merriam and Caffarella have called the 'vexing complexity' of adult education participation" (as cited in Wikelund et al., 1992, p. 24).

However, Miller's (1967) force-field analysis offers one approach that seems especially well-suited to researching welfare education and training issues, given the many positive and negative factors that have been identified as playing a role in helping people move from welfare to work.

*Potential factors affecting participation in education.*

Numerous factors have been identified in welfare reform literature as either facilitating or impeding a welfare recipient's transition from welfare to work. These can be thought of as positive or negative forces that could also impact the potential participation of welfare recipients in education or job training programs, as well as the effectiveness of the education process itself.

Potential positive forces that can serve as driving motivational factors in the lives of welfare recipients have been identified in the literature: *1) access to available financial resources for education* (Buechner, 1996); *2) better job/job advancement* (Wikelund, 1993; Beder & Valentine, 1990, as cited in Wikelund, 1993); *3) children's well-being* (Wikelund et al., 1993); *4) community/church involvement* (Beder & Valentine, 1990, as cited in Wikelund, 1993); *5) continued receipt of welfare benefits for attending classes* (Wikelund, 1993); *6) determination and commitment to succeed* (Buechner, 1996); *7) dissatisfaction with present circumstances* (Buechner, 1996); *8) diversion* (Beder & Valentine, 1990, as cited inWikelund, 1993); *9) economic need* (Beder & Valentine, 1990, as cited inWikelund, 1993; *10) educational advancement* (Beder & Valentine, 1990, as cited in Wikelund, 1993; Wikelund, 1993); *11)*

*encouragement to explore opportunities*(Buechner, 1996); *12) family responsibilities* (Beder & Valentine, 1990, as cited in Wikelund, 1993); *13) increased organizational support through friends and relatives* (Buechner, 1996); *14) independence*(Wikelund, 1993); *15) launching* (Beder & Valentine, 1990, as cited inWikelund, 1993); 16) *life experience with growth-oriented outcome* (Merriam, Mott, & Lee, 1996); *17) literacy development*(Beder & Valentine, 1990, as cited in Wikelund, 1993); *18) need to be good role model for children*(Wikelund, 1993); *19) network of family and/or other social support*(Buechner, 1996); *20) "perceived opportunity structures"* (Wikelund, 1993; Wikelund et al., 1993); *21) positive visions of the future* (Wikelund, 1993);
*22) self-improvement* (Wikelund, 1993; Beder & Valentine, 1990, as cited inWikelund, 1993); *23) strong faith commitment resulting in increased self-worth*(Buechner, 1996); *24) "symbolic activity" of helping participants begin to rid themselves of internalized feelings of inadequacy* (Beder & Valentine, 1990, as cited inWikelund, 1993); *25) time as ingredient to reverse growth-inhibiting response* (Merriam, Mott, & Lee, 1996); and*26) "vestibule activity," preparing people to be able to make further changes*(Beder & Valentine, 1990, as cited in Wikelund, 1993).

Potential negative forces that can serve as barriers in the lives of welfare recipients include:
*27) alcohol and drug dependence* (Danziger et al., 1998; Olson & Pavetti, 1996); *28) domestic violence* (Danziger et al., 1998; Johnson & Mechstroth, 1998; Olson & Pavetti, 1996); *29) financial emergencies* (Johnson & Mechstroth, 1998); *30) financial instability of single mothers* (Buechner, 1996); *31) health or behavioral problems of children* (Olson & Pavetti, 1996); *32) housing instability* (Johnson & Mechstroth, 1998; Olson & Pavetti, 1996); *33) inability to provide a living/lack of basic skills*(Buechner, 1996; Danziger et al., 1998; Olson & Pavetti, 1996); *34) inadequate transportation* (Danziger et al., 1998; Johnson & Mechstroth, 1998); *35) involvement with child welfare system* (Olson & Pavetti, 1996); *36) lack of health insurance* (Johnson & Mechstroth, 1998); *37) lack of knowledge about educational opportunities* (Buechner, 1996); *38) lack of knowledge about workplace rules*(Danziger et al., 1998); *39) lack of specialized child care*(Johnson & Mechstroth, 1998); *40) life experience with growth-inhibiting outcome* (Merriam, Mott & Lee, 1996); *41) limited access to organizational support* (Buechner, 1996); *42) low achievment in past education* (Buechner, 1996; Danziger et al., 1998); *43) low self-esteem* (Buechner, 1996); *44) low work experience* (Danziger et al., 1998); *45) multiple barriers* (Danziger et al., 1998; Johnson & Mechstroth, 1998); *46) perceived discrimination* (Danziger et al., 1998); *47) physical and mental health problems* (Danziger et al., 1998; Johnson & Mechstroth, 1998; Olson & Pavetti, 1996); and *48) weak family structure* (Buechner, 1996).

### 2. Importance of Issue to Research and Practice

The issue of welfare reform is extremely complex and poses significant challenges for both practitioner and researcher alike. Yet by working together, answers to difficult questions can emerge—and in a shorter time frame than if each worked alone.

In practice, the adult educator who works with low-income, disadvantaged audiences in educational and training settings knows first-hand through experience what methods and activities work best in motivating and keeping the interest of the students.

Educators like Rosilee Trotta, who has 30 years of experience working with low-income audiences, know instinctively what techniques will be effective. As extension urban youth and family specialist with University of Missouri Outreach and Extension, Trotta also serves as program director for a new program in St. Louis called WorkWays™, which teaches job readiness skills to individuals receiving welfare benefits.

Trotta wrote the WorkWays™ educational curriculum specifically for use with low-income individuals who have little formal education. Her experience with low-income audiences convinced her that the curriculum must be highly interactive and fun to successfully interest and motivate participants. The curriculum addresses five key areas: self-attitude, responsibility, communication, decision making and problem solving, and preparing for the workplace.

"We help participants realize they have the ability to reach their full potential, and then we help them do that," Trotta said. "We use a holistic approach to teach skills in WorkWays that they can transfer to other parts of their lives, at home, at work, and in the community. It's important to meet people where *they* are, not where *we* would like them to be. Then we help them move to where they want to be. We respect people's life experiences and help them to identify and value their strengths and expand their thinking" (R.A. Trotta, personal communication, July 15, 1999).

As WorkWays™ moves forward, formal evaluationsare being conducted to validate the program's approach, and findings will be used to improve the process. In this way, researchers play a significant role in measuring variables, reporting perceptions, and drawing conclusions that will help further the study of the issue for the field of education as a whole.

Large-scale, national, random sample evaluations of welfare-to-work programs have shown that traditional education and training programs are not as effective in helping people move into the workplace as mixed strategy approaches that link education strategies with job-search goals.

The critical importance of U.S. welfare policy at this point in history requires both experienced educational practitioners and researchers to collaborate, linking research and practice to speed the process of finding innovative and more effective educational solutions to the intricate challenges posed by welfare policy changes.

## 3. Explanations of Models and Illustrations of New Insights

Harry Miller (1967) developed his Force-Field Analysis of Adult Participation in Education during the War on Poverty in the 1960s. His approach seems especially useful in light of 1996 welfare policy changes.

Miller (1967) hypothesized possible relationships between an individual's perceived needs, based on Maslow's (1954) needs hierarchy of survival, safety, belonging, recognition, achievement and self-realization; Lewin's (1947) force-field analysis of the relation between psychological and situational factors; and social class (lower-lower, working, lower-middle, and upper-middle).

Miller's (1967, p. 4) force-field analysis is based on four assumptions he developed to predict participation levels, based on interactions of personal and social forces, according to the two major variables of "personal needs" and "social forces." *(The headings and formulas have been added for clarification.)*

a. **Strong Personal Needs/Strong Social Forces (congruence)**
Strong personal needs + Strong social forces = High participation

b. **Strong Personal Needs/No Social Forces (lack of support)**
Strong personal needs + No supporting or facilitating social forces = Generally low participation, but erratically high at times

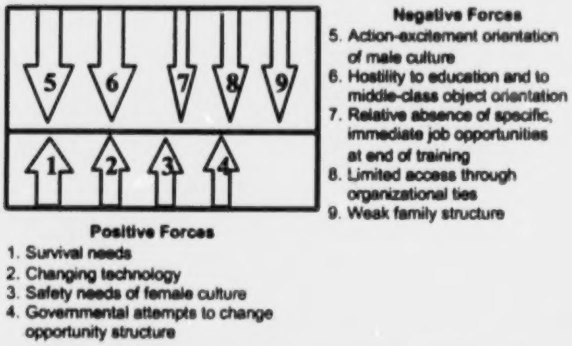
c. **Weak Personal Needs/Strong Social Forces (short-lived)**
Weak personal needs + Strong social forces = Initial fairly high participation that may drop sharply after initial period

d. **Conflicting Personal Needs/Social Forces (tension)**
Positive personal needs + Negative social forces = Varying participation depending on strength of the social force, but considerable tension will exist in program itself.

The concept of the force field presents a visual way to identify and understand the relationships between various positive and negative forces, either "personal needs" or "social forces."

*Figure 1.* Education for Vocational Competence: Lower-Lower Class Level.

*Source:* Miller, 1967, p. 21.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Negative Forces
5. Action-excitement orientation of male culture
6. Hostility to education and to middle-class object orientation
7. Relative absence of specific, immediate job opportunities at end of training
8. Limited access through organizational ties
9. Weak family structure
Positive Forces
1. Survival needs
2. Changing technology
3. Safety needs of female culture
4. Governmental attempts to change opportunity structure

Figure 1 shows the strength of a "force field" created by opposing positive and negative forces for education for vocational competence for a person in the lower-lower class level. Positive (driving) forces upward meet (restraining) negative forces downward. The width of each arrow indicates relative strength of each force. The lower position of the horizontal line represents the point of "equilibrium," or the resulting low level of motivation for participation.

According to Lewin (1947), the equilibrium point can be changed either by *adding* forces in the desired direction or by *diminishing* opposing forces (p. 26).

Here is an example: Consider a person on welfare being required to attend job training. In the 1960s, when the government offered job training programs (social force, #4 arrow), Miller (1967) considered training opportunities to be a positive force. However, he explains that the lower-lowers are "the only group which is actually hostile to education" (personal need, #6 arrow). The opposing forces create tension. The result: a relatively low level of motivation to participate.

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Now picture how the force field in Figure 1 might look today in light of the 1996 welfare changes. Two major *new* social forces (*threat of government sanctions for noncompliance to work* and *threat of 5-year lifetime limits of benefits*) would be added. Although it *seems* as though these forces would be negative, we cannot be sure without further research. What is the effect of the sanctions and threat of lifetime benefit limit? Using Miller's (1967) force-field approach provides a way to identify key forces operating in any situation, but also to be able to analyze how those factors might relate to one another to affect participation.

In addition, Miller's (1967) #4 positive arrow (*governmental attempts to change opportunity structure*) would be deleted, reflecting removal of training opportunities that welfare recipients were *persuaded*, rather than *ordered*, to attend. The social force represented by the #7 negative arrow (*relative absence of specific, immediate job opportunities at end of training*) would be deleted from the negative forces above. Today, obtaining a job is the *mandated* goal. According to Miller's analysis, this force is in line with the lower-lower's action-excitement orientation, an "absorption in the immediate present" (p. 9). Therefore, an additional positive arrow would be added below to reflect the relative presence of job opportunities as a positive force.

## 4. Discussion of Way in Which Issue Relates to Conference Theme of Linking Theory and Practice

When policymakers imposed work-first welfare policies in 1996, they sought to cut rising costs by forcing welfare recipients into the workforce and off public rolls. In the three years since they imposed these new policies, more than 2 million former welfare recipients have moved into jobs (Samuel, 1999). Yet a recent Educational Testing Service study, which examined job prospects of former welfare recipients in light of their skills and educational level, concluded that what the government is essentially doing is "moving (welfare recipients) out of welfare traps into poverty traps" (Samuel, 1999, p. A8). Anthony P. Carnivale, one of the study's authors, contends that self-sufficiency is a long way off due to the poor work skills and educational deficiencies that most former welfare recipients take with them to work, and correcting those deficits is unappealing to most employers and politicians because it is so costly (Samuel, 1999).

As educational practitioners and researchers, we face significant challenges, yet intriguing opportunities.

As practitioners, we must find innovative new ways and improve our techniques to teach low-income audiences more effectively, focusing especially on how we can accomplish our goals in shorter-term, more cost-effective educational and training programs that are more job-focused, helping people to develop the skills they so desperately need to survive.

As researchers, we must focus our work on research that makes a difference in people's lives, by teaming up with experienced educators to study and document what educational techniques work and do not work with low-income audiences in today's cost-conscious environment.

Together, by truly linking research and practice, we can make an impact on society and in the lives of many individuals, such as one 33-year-old African-American mother who recently completed the WorkWays™ job readiness training in St. Louis. After being "depressed most of

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the time" and "not caring" about herself or others, she recently said after completing the training: "I know so far I'm doing great. Out of 33 years, and then you go off somewhere, and in three weeks, bam, they can change your life. I'm really impressed" (WorkWays participant, personal communication, June 4, 1999).

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# ESL Program Evaluation: Lessons From Outside the U.S.

Robert E. Nolan

## Abstract

This paper reports the results of an evaluation study conducted in San Jose, Costa Rica. The purpose of the evaluation was program improvement of an adult EFL Institute. The theoretical approach used in this study follows that of Patton (1980) who advocated practical and useful outcomes for program evaluation. He also advocated qualitative methods in conducting evaluation studies. The outcomes of this evaluation highlighted the Institute's excellent application of Structural Linguistic theory (Hammerly, 1985, 1991) mixed with adult education methods. Another outcome highlighted the poor timing of communication exercises, which were not implemented at the teachable moment as much as the administration assumed.

## Purposes and Scope of the Evaluation

The Director of the Instituto Interamericano de Idiomas, S.A. (INTENSA) had proposed that an outside perspective be brought to the Institute for the purposes of program update, critique and perhaps adjustment. As stated by the Director and the English Language Coordinator at INTENSA, the evolution of a high quality language program requires constant self-criticism, constant surveying of the market (client stakeholders), and a constant update on learning theory. Thus, the purposes of this evaluation could best be described as formative. The Director of the program solicited evaluative feedback on the program because of the intense competition for quality programs in a city with 23 adult EFL providers, including Berlitz (Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad, 1999), but excluding numerous bilingual elementary and secondary schools.

It was hoped that the uniqueness of this case study might provide insights to directors and researchers of ESL programs in the United States. The researcher wanted to know if EFL programs with different sets of assumptions, yet similar aims as ESL programs in the U.S. could offer valuable insights. He also wanted to know how the program could guarantee participants that they would be able to speak English at approximately FSI level 3 at the end of the program (by comparison U.S. Peace Corps aims, but rarely achieves bringing their trainees to FSI level 2). The Institute under study proposed this goal to each of its new enrollees in a one on one orientation session. Beginning from no English language facility at all, the Institute practically guaranteed reaching FSI level 3 within 12 ? 14 months of part-time study. An EFL program, of course, does not exist within the same context as an ESL program, since participants are not immersed in the culture and language they are studying. However, it was proposed that a totally different setting with perhaps different assumptions about learning might contribute useful insights to ESL program administrators. Since the settings are so different, and since foreign EFL programs resemble human resource development in the private sector because of their funding, this study was thought to be useful for administrators of ESL programs in the U.S. In foreign countries where budgets loom large and mistakes made in the administration of programs could well result in the closing of the Institute, administration practices need to be much more strategic than in the U.S. What do adult EFL centers do in a free market economy that might shed light on more efficient, more effective ESL programs in the United States?

The evaluation study was limited to teaching methodology, instructional materials, reactions of students to methods and materials, students' reasons for choosing INTENSA and student achievement as measured by fluency and accuracy in free conversation. Hence, budgetary data, teacher tenure, personnel matters were excluded from the study. Rather, the study focused on instructional effectiveness, that is program effectiveness related to student outcomes, student satisfaction and proficiency exclusively. Although INTENSA had both a Spanish as a second language program and what Hammerly (1985) terms an English as a remote second language program or English as a foreign language program, this evaluation gathered data on the latter alone. Indeed, the EFL program was the major thrust of the Institute.

The evaluator had ample experience in teaching both ESL and EFL as well as program evaluation. He had taught English as a foreign language in Peru, English as a second language at a community college in the U.S., and directed a Peace Corps training program in Central America. As an evaluator, he evaluated statewide programs, local programs and national training projects. He also administered a teacher-training project and a large ESL program.

### Methodology used to Gather Data for this Evaluation Study

This study combined action research and case study research methods. The unit of analysis was a single program, which calls for a case study method, whereas the methods of collecting data involved participating in the Institute's activities as a participant observer. The participant observer's role included serving as an instructor-trainee, later as an instructor, and still later as the designer and instructor of an in-service training session, as an observer and interviewer of students, teachers and administrators. The study included over two hundred hours of observation, seventy interviews with students, teachers and administrators and the reading of hundreds of pages of documents including textbooks used in the program, orientation materials and policy manuals. Data was collected from

August 22, 1998 through January 30, 1999.

The data collected during this time period was qualitative in nature. Notes were made in a journal after each activity. For example, the researcher underwent a five-day training period to be able to qualify as a new teacher in the program. During the training sessions themselves, the researcher took notes. After the training period the researcher taught classes at the Institute under the supervision of a Master teacher for two weeks. Class sessions lasted 2.5 to 3 hours, after which he recorded his perceptions of the activity. In similar fashion during the interviews themselves, he did not take notes. Notes of the interviews were made immediately afterwards on a laptop computer in a small office provided by the Institute for that purpose. Similar to the data collection procedure used during the pre-service training, observations of teachers instructing in the classroom provided opportunities to take notes during the observations themselves. Since the researcher's role was a trainee rather than an evaluator, his presence in the classrooms along with his note taking appeared not to annoy the teachers.

Data was analyzed in the following manner: notes were taken in a small notebook and later categorized by recopying each interview or observation on a 3 X 5 card. At the top of each card the researcher placed a short title or statement which indicated the theme of the interview or observation. Cards were then grouped according to their respective themes. Through this process certain themes considered descriptive of the program were highlighted and later reviewed. Summaries of observations and interviews were entered into a Microsoft Word program, printed off and analyzed for further categorization. Certain words and statements were underlined when they were judged to contribute to themes that emerged from the narratives.

Validity checks were conducted in an ongoing manner by returning to those interviewed for further questioning and clarification, as well as confirmation of the accuracy of themes identified by the researcher. A final validity check consisted in a presentation of the draft of the evaluation to the Program Director, English Coordinator, and senior instructional staff in a modified exit interview summarizing the documented observations. Eight administrative and instructional staff members of INTENSA then reacted to the draft document, pointing out whatever they considered to be biases or misrepresentations on the part of the evaluator. Feedback from this group was then incorporated into the final document.

### Theoretical Framework Informing the Evaluation

The theoretical approach to evaluation used in this study emphasizes practicality and usefulness (Patton, 1980). Under this approach the evaluation lacks validity if it does not appear useful in the eyes of the practitioners. Evaluation should always lead to improvement or, at the very least, heightened awareness among practitioners of the strengths and weaknesses of the program that will eventually lead to program improvement. If an evaluation study does not result in program change or the results of an evaluation cannot be implemented because they are too theoretical, the evaluation according to this perspective is worthless (Patton, 1980). In educational circles, this approach is called formative evaluation.

The study subscribes to the proposition that the strength of an educational program is also related to the degree to which the program is able to put theory into practice. Since the program administrator adhered strongly to a structural linguistic approach to language learning as articulated by Hammerly (1985), the evaluation constantly probed the manner in which Hammerly's structural linguistic theory guided actual practice. Indeed, one of the strengths of this program was the clarity and constancy with which language learning theory was communicated to the instructional staff and continuously implemented by them. An example of this continuous adherence to theory was a list of four cardinal rules that was printed, framed and left hanging in the language coordinator's office for all to see.

### Strengths Noted in the Program

The Director of the program, who has been in his position for twenty years, took special pains to articulate a clear theory of language learning to the staff, so that this theory permeated the day to day operation of the program. From the preparation of instructional materials to the training of new teachers, his theory emphasized grammatical accuracy and active involvement of the adult learners. Hammerly (1985) proposed the theory embraced by the Institute in the environment of bilingual Canada. Hammerly, a speaker of English as a second language and Spanish as a first language had worked at the Foreign Service Institute under the late Earl Stevick (Hammerly, 1985, 1991). His theory, which he eventually called "languistics," professed to be reactionary to the current emphasis on communicative competence much in vogue in the United States. According to Hammerly (1985) undue emphasis on communicative approaches to language teaching has resulted in widespread appearances of a pidgin. Hammerly's theory which emphasized accuracy and fluency translated into a curriculum based on a structural linguistic grammar combined with high student involvement and copious support materials. Because the Institute assumed that most of its students filled adult social roles, study time outside of class was assumed to be non existent. Hence the Institute placed a heavy emphasis on classroom drills and practice, practice, practice. Time on task, one of the oldest axioms in educational theory seemed to be another of the overriding principles of the Institute.

Four basic principles guide teaching methodology in the program. They are both linguistically robust and reflect a knowledge of adult learning theory. Group work is emphasized. Emphasis is also placed on early and continued success. The third principle is student control. Students control the pace and content of drills. Finally, the last principle emphasizes maximum practice time for students. How do these principles which, by the way, are framed and visible in various rooms of the Institute find application in the classroom?

Teachers begin each lesson within one of the 52 modules by modeling a grammatical sentence structure. The students repeat through the model after the teacher. Next the teacher has half the group prompt the other half on a drill based on the sentence structure just modeled. Half of the group gives the prompts orally with their books open, while the other half answers with their books closed. This is then repeated in reverse. The half of the group that previously modeled or cued is now the half that responds. During this time the instructor listens carefully to diagnose possible mispronunciations or problems with structure. The teacher may note mispronounced words to list them on the board for subsequent drilling. Students then form pairs in which they repeat to their partners the exercise or dialog twice through. The instructor, meanwhile, moves around from pair to pair checking pronunciation and structure. The same method is used in transformation drills, substitution drills and questions for content. The instructor rarely provides the cues, leaving this function up to the students. The instructor's role is clearly one of a monitor.

This method places the task entirely on the learner, avoids wasteful 'teacher talk', and maximizes the instructor's time. In a real sense, the teacher acts as model approximately 5% of the time and as monitor 95% of the time. The reason this technique is eminently 'adult' is because we know from research that adults want time to practice newly learned skills to fine tune their abilities. It also avoids the "mystery/mastery complex" (Curran, 1976) of the Berlitz type classes where the native speaker teacher is the master of the knowledge and the struggling learner is trying to unravel the mystery of the language under intense pressure.

When the module has been mastered according to the perceptions of the teacher, the teacher calls in the EFL program coordinator who tests the group on that particular module. Calling in an outside evaluator lends an appropriate amount of objectivity to the program by taking assessment out of the hands of the teacher. It also provides the coordinator an avenue of ongoing evaluation and supervision of both student progress and teacher effectiveness. If the coordinator judges that the group has mastered the module, then students are allowed to move on to the next higher module. One or other student during this evaluation might perform admirably resulting in the coordinator's consulting with the teacher to move the student to a higher group. Likewise the student may struggle with the assessment indicating a possible move to a lower group. Moves are not ordered or done in a high-handed way. Rather students are counseled into a level that best reflects their learning needs. Because at any one time the Institute had 12 to 14 sections, all on different levels, placing students at their optimum learning levels was a realistic option. During student interviews it soon became obvious that one of the major strengths of the program was its modular structure. Students could be moved around any of 14 different levels of mastery, insuring homogeneous groups. The modular approach also provided a safeguard against learner frustration, because it insured that the students would work at their own respective levels.

### Areas for Program Improvement

From this observer's perspective, the emphasis on structure might have been tempered with more emphasis on communication. Bloom (1956) and more recently Sternberg (1988) convincingly demonstrated the relation between automaticity and creativity or problem solving. The ultimate evaluation of language proficiency is in free communication alone. Granted, as Hammerly (1985) insists, language is a complex system that takes a long time to learn, and his insistence on grammatical accuracy is well taken. There are no short cuts. Yet an overemphasis on grammatical structure obscures the importance of the so-called teaching moment. Numerous examples from interviews and observations seem to demonstrate this. Interviews with students who were hesitant to respond in class, demonstrated surprising fluency and accuracy in English when spoken to informally outside the classroom.

### Applications to Practice

The results of this evaluation highlight the value of strictly adhering to theory in the administration of ESL and EFL programs. This particular case demonstrates how strict adherence to theory enables a program to reach its stated goals. In the case under study, it allowed the institute to conduct its own teacher preparation program, to train prospective teachers in ten days, even though the requirement was only a four-year college degree regardless of major. Strict adherence to theory allowed the Institute to rotate instructors every week with little or no disruption to the students. Reliance on theory also allowed the institute to refine its pre-service and in-service programs while developing a large supply of teacher-made materials. A well organized pre-service program counteracted the deleterious impact of teacher turnover, since prospective teachers were constantly being trained.

Two theoretical constructs were used in the program to assist in its administration. The Structural Linguistic theory of Hammerly (1985, 1991) provided the structure for the modular curriculum used. The theory of community and community building of Peck (1987) pervaded the organization of the Institute. Faithful references to these theories provided a conceptual glue which gave the institute a flavor that prompted students to say, "This is a good place to learn English."

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# Framework to Identify In-service Education Needs of Extension Practitioners

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## Abstract

A new approach was used to identify in-service education needs of Clemson University extension personnel. The approach used included responses from county staff and extension specialists. First, agents were asked to identify training needs in three areas--subject matter, professional development, and technology. The training needs identified by agents were shared with extension specialists as they prepared for their annual in-service offerings. Agent needs and in-service offerings of specialists were matched to identify gaps in training needs. Findings revealed a good match between what was needed and what will be offered. A framework was developed based on the findings.

## Introduction

American agriculture and lifestyles of American people have drastically changed from what they were in 1914. Extension had to adapt to the societal changes to reorient to a fundamentally industrial and service oriented population (Russell, 1995). The roles and responsibilities of extension agents have also changed. The educational programs delivered by extension agents today are more varied than they have ever been and will continue to change to meet the changing needs of the clientele they serve (Radhakrishna, 1998). In addition, the new technology of information gathering, exchange and processing is forcing CES into new roles and away from the traditional research-specialist-agent-farmer hierarchy that has characterized technology transfer (ES-USDA, 1988).

The future of extension programs will be determined to a large degree by the ability of the agents to do the job and the extent to which they are up-to-date on the subject matter topics. As indicated by Prawl, Medlin, and Gross (1984), the success of educational programs in extension, just as in teaching, depends heavily upon the abilities of individual professionals. The delivery of a high level of competence is the principle public justification for the Cooperative Extension Service (Strother, 1977). Furthermore, to constantly produce a high volume of quality work, employees must be competent, able to do the job, and be willing to put forth effort required for the job (Mott, 1972).

One of the most perplexing questions facing extension staff development is what type of professional development activities do extension professionals need? Adult learning theory emphasizes the importance of using the needs of the clientele as a basis for in-service training

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programs. As indicated by Lentz (1983), the purpose of identifying needs is to build a foundation for providing in-service education. Such identification will assist staff development leaders in establishing priorities and designing in-service education offerings. Barrick and Powell (1986) suggest that the strength of in-service training and the follow-up evaluation depends upon planning and planning depends on assessing needs.

In-service training is used extensively by county staff in ClemsonUniversity's Cooperative Extension Service. In fiscal year 1998, there were 99 in-services conducted through the Extension Staff Development office, with over 2083 participants. Of the 99 in-services offered, 55 were subject matter topics with 1580 participants, 28 were professional development topics involving 296 participants and 16 were in the area of general education involving 207 participants. A majority of these in-services were held at Columbia (a central location), Regional Education Centers (RECs), and Clemson.

The traditional approach of identifying in-service training needs has been asking extension specialists to submit subject matter topics, location, date and time and educational resources needed to do the training. This approach has worked well in the past, but has not been able to meet the expectations of extension agents. Agents felt that their needs of in-service training did not match with what was offered, resulting in not getting the training needed to improve their skills and be current. In addition, rapid changes in technology and information delivery systems and changing roles and responsibilities of extension agents call for new approaches to identify and deliver in-service training programs. This study was conducted to develop a framework to identify in-service training needs of extension agents and determine how those needs can be met.

## Purpose and Objectives

The overall purpose of the study was to develop a framework to identify in-service training needs of extension agents and county staff. Objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify in-service training needs of agents relative to subject matter topics, professional development and technology.

2. Categorize the identified training needs into Public Service and Agriculture (PSA) goals of Clemson University.

3. Based on objectives 1, 2, and 3, develop a framework that can be used to identify future in-service training needs of agents.

## Methodology

In this section, a brief description of Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service is presented. In addition, the population used for the study, instrumentation, and data collection and analysis procedures are also discussed.

The Clemson University Extension Programs goal is to help all families, individuals and communities affected by such changes and identify ways to understand and address those changes so that it will improve the quality of life of all South Carolina citizens. The Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service Plan of Work (POW) is driven by base programs of the state and of the nationwide Cooperative Extension System. The POW contains 16 initiatives, covering a wide variety of programs and topics that address the critical needs of South Carolina citizens. These 16 initiatives are further grouped by the five strategic goalsof Public Service and Agriculture of Clemson University which include -1)Agrisystems Productivity Profitability, 2) Economic and Community Development, 3) Environmental Conservation, 4) Food safety and Nutrition, and 5) Youth Development.

### Population and Instrumentation

The population for this study consisted of all county extension staff employed by Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service (CUCES). A survey instrument suitable for electronic communication was developed to collect data. The instrument was designed to obtain information on two major characteristics: 1) the in-service education needs of extension agents relative to subject matter topics, professional development and technology, and 2) demographic information--years of experience, primary area of program responsibility, etc. Respondents were asked to list at least five topics in the three categories (subject matter, professional development and technology) for which they needed in-service training. In addition, county extension staff were asked to comment on their previous in-service training experiences. The instrument was validated for question clarity and content by a panel of three experts consisting of an extension specialist, in-service training coordinator, and an information technology specialist.

The instrument was sent to all county agents via electronic mail with a request to return (via electronic mail) the completed surveys. After two follow-ups (electronic mail), a total of 133 agents responded. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the data.

## Findings

### Objective 1& 2: Identify Training Needs

The training needs identified by agents in the areas of subject matter topics, professional development and technology are shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, a total of 100 topics were identified by county agents. Of these 100 topics, 65 (65%) were in subject matter areas grouped by five PSA goals, 21 (21%) in professional development and 14(14%) in technology.

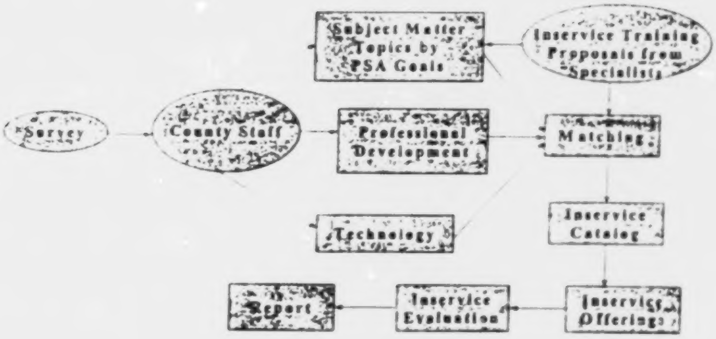
Also shown in Table 1 are in-service training proposals submitted by Extension specialists Extension specialists submitted a total of 76 in-service training proposals. Of these 76 proposals, 52(68%) were in subject matter areas grouped by five PSA goals, 16(21%) in professional development, and 8(10.5%) in technology. Overall, data in Table 1, indicate good match between what was needed and what will be offered. However, there are PSA goal areas where limited number of in-service proposals submitted by specialists compared to the need expressed by county agents. It must be noted here that one cannot meet all the training needs expressed by agents because of availability of expertise, time, resources, location and other responsibilities specialists may have in offering in-service training.

Table 1: List of Training Needs Expressed by County Agents and In-service Training Proposals Submitted by Specialists Categorized by PSA Goals, Subject Matter, Professional Development, and Technology

| | County Agents | | Specialists | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Topics by PSA Goals | f | % | f | % |
| **Subject Matter Topics** | | | | |
| PSA Goal 1: Agrisystems Productivity & Profitability | 13 | 13.0 | 8 | 10.5 |
| PSA Goal 2: Economic & Community Development | 9 | 9.0 | 9 | 11.8 |
| PSA Goal 3: Environmental Conservation | 24 | 24.0 | 20 | 26.4 |
| PSA Goal 4: Food Safety and Nutrition | 8 | 8.0 | 8 | 10.5 |
| PSA Goal 5: Youth Development | 11 | 11.0 | 7 | 9.2 |
| **Total (Subject Matter Topics** | **65** | **65.0** | **52** | **68.4** |
| **Professional Development** | 21 | 21.0 | 16 | 21.1 |
| **Technology** | 14 | 14.0 | 8 | 10.5 |
| Grand Total | 100 | 100.0 | 76 | 100.0 |

Objective 3: Framework for In-service Training

Figure 1 depicts the proposed framework for offering in-service education programs at Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service. As shown in Figure 1, the responses from county agents to the three major components of the survey--subject matter, professional development and technology were summarized. For purposes of clarity and focus, the identified topics were further grouped into Clemson University's five Public Service and Agriculture (PSA) goals--1) Profitability of Agriculture, 2) Economic and Community Development, 3) Food safety and Nutrition, 4) Environmental Conservation, and 5) Youth Development (Table 1). The 100



subject matter topics identified by agents and the 76 in-service proposals submitted by specialists were compared and/or matched to determine final in-service offerings to be included in a catalogue. An in-service training catalog was developed and distributed to all extension agents.

**Figure 1: Framework to Identify In-service Training Needs**

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The framework has provided a sense of direction and purpose to offering in-service training programs at Clemson University. The findings are of immense value to extension staff development in establishing priorities to design and to implement in-service training programs. The approach used has helped both county staff, specialists and staff development personnel in targeting the critical needs of training relative to subject matter topics, professional development and technology.

The findings, especially the matching of needs of agents with in-service offerings of specialists have helped the staff development unit to collaborate with other agencies--university and private-- to offer in-service training for mutual benefit. For example, the Human Resources Office at Clemson University and Extension Staff development are coordinating six training programs relative to professional development. Similarly, discussion is on-going between Extension Staff Development and the Technical College Systems in South Carolina to identify areas of training where both institutions share expertise, educational resources, and costs.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Staff development should explore opportunities for agents to meet with other agents in other counties with similar responsibilities to share ideas and successful programs.

2. Staff development should develop a plan or a mechanism to track or document trainings taken by county staff to determine the effectiveness of training and its lasting results that can be traced.

3. Extension administration, in consultation with county extension directors, initiative

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chairs and staff development should develop guidelines to involve county staff in the planning, development, and delivery of in-service training programs.

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# "Aren't you glad you're not stupid?" The Experiences of Adult Students with Invisible Disabilities and Higher Education.

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## Abstract

Students with invisible disabilities were interviewed on disability disclosure, accommodations, and other experiences while undergraduate and graduate students at a large university. The discussion centers on stigma associated with disability and its affects on learning.

Most disability literature focuses on specific disabilities (Jordan, 1996) or disability as a general category (Gadbow & DuBois, 1998). An invisible disability cannot be "seen" by another person. Examples of invisible disabilities are learning disabilities, mental disorders, traumatic brain injury, visual and hearing impairments. The fastest growing group of students on college campuses are students with disabilities--specifically those with invisible disabilities (Brinckerhoff, Shaw, & McGuire, 1993). This growth is due to completion of college preparatory programs, advances in science and technology, and the onset of disability in adulthood inspiring a career change. People with disabilities form a large, fluid minority group because of self identification and other factors. As a society we view disability in terms of access and are rarely aware of individuals with invisible disabilities. A person with an invisible disability discloses selectively due to societal stigma assigned to disability.

Stigma is "negative characteristics imputed to an individual because of membership in a social group or category held to be inferior" (Frank, 1988, p. 97). People who possess characteristics which make them different deviate from the social norms related to attractiveness and perceived capability. Those who possess the "differentness" are stigmatized while others are "normal,"

> … a stigma, an undesired differentness from what we had anticipated. We and those who do not depart negatively from the particular expectations at issue I shall call the *normals* (italics in original). …By definition, of course, we believe the person with a stigma is not quite human. On this assumption we exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly, reduce his life chances. (Goffman, 1963, p. 5)

"Normal" refers to people who are unimpeded by barriers in their physical, social, or cognitive environments. Stigma assumes the "disabling environment" (Hahn, 1988) is natural and problems encountered by a person with a disability are the result of the impairment (Fine & Asch, 1988). In many studies "disability is portrayed as the variable that predicts the outcome of social interaction when, in fact, social contexts shape the meaning of a disability in a person's life" (Fine & Asch, 1988, p. 9). Society has constructed the values by which one group is deserving while another is suspect offering "inferior persons" restricted educational and occupational opportunities on the assumption that to give them full opportunity denies a more "deserving" individual (Frank, 1988; Hahn, 1988; Jacobs, 1974) which increases experiences of alienation, and decreases interaction and communication with "normals." Frank (1988) writes, "Despite the capacity or willingness to participate in "normal" society, stigmatized individuals are often barred from equal access in such social domains as education, dating and marriage, employment, and use of public facilities" (1988, p. 98). The environment includes "public attitudes as a crucial component of the surroundings with which disabled people must contend" (Hahn, 1988, p. 40).

In higher education adults with disabilities are expected to express their accommodation needs These questions were explored: What coping skills have been learned or are needed to enable the communication of accommodation? Are the emotions expressed and/or felt a deterrent to adequate and appropriate communication of accommodation needs? Are barriers to communication internal, external, blatant or subtle? What types of information are needed to facilitate accommodation by instructors?

## Research Design

Interview data were analyzed using a constant comparative method to generate grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Seven adults (arthritis, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, vision impairments, back injury, and severe asthma) answered questions about disclosure, accommodations, comfort, conditions, descriptions, others' reactions, and coaching. Six students were interviewed in person and one was interviewed over the internet. Three white males were from 38 to 61 years of age. Two black women and two white women ranged from 30 to 50 years old. Interviews lasted sixty to ninety minutes. Transcripts were checked against the audiotapes, read, and read for coding. After transcripts were coded, the categories were written up into descriptive text (Wolcott, 1994).

### Aren't you glad you're not stupid?

An experience shared by individuals with invisible disabilities that affect cognitive functioning is the feeling of being "stupid." Some participants viewed themselves as less intelligent because of early experiences with teachers. As Mel, earning two simultaneous degrees, remembered,

> One of the things that really stick in my mind is that we were trying to make circles and my circles were all over the page because of trying to stay within the lines for dyslexics is almost damn near impossible. At least it was for me and my brother. Anyway, she [the teacher] took my paper up to the front of the class and she says look what [Mel] did. He didn't do worth shit on this paper. …From that day on I learned to hide my work or I didn't do it.

Ray approached a counselor believing there was something medically wrong with him or he was just stupid. After the testing was complete the counselor asked, "aren't you glad you're not stupid? (Ray)" after making a diagnosis of a learning disability. After leaving graduate school for a year to seek counseling for depression, Nan was relieved to be diagnosed, she "was running around volunteering the information because I was so happy to have a name for it!"

Diagnosis is not a simple matter; often the counselor makes the diagnosis with the assistance of the person or a family member. Nan "found out the name of it by reading an article in Time Magazine," information she immediately brought to her therapist who had recently begun to suspect attention deficient disorder. Mel's mother "heard about this Dr. Livingston in New York that was doing work for dyslexics," because of this she had her sons tested. Mel was out of high school by the time of diagnosis, having been treated as if he were below average intelligence during his education.

After diagnosis Reba wondered what next, "afraid to [return to school] because I didn't think I could do it." A diagnosis does not eliminate the fear of failure but can provide a false sense of knowing about the disability. As Nan described the reaction she and her academic advisor had to the diagnosis, "she and I both thought that all I had to do was get on medication and that would be it. Medication would be the cure-all. It never occurred to me that I was going to have to take therapy or that I was going to have to relearn things or learn things."

Ray was diagnosed during the 1940's when special education did not exist. His mother found a Russian anthropologist, familiar with dysfunctioning to tutor him in math,

> I couldn't understand math problems. I couldn't put two things together. I could count to twelve using my fingers and I couldn't see how five and seven made twelve. They were separate entities. They'd say close your eyes and look at the alphabet and I'd close my eyes and I said I don't see any alphabet.

Years later, while reading about philosophy in the encyclopedia, Ray understood,

> Marx was talking to Engels saying you could see in your mind's eye different things and it wasn't until that time that I realized you could throw pictures in your mind. Then you could see them. But when these teachers were telling, way back in third grade, shut your eyes and look at the alphabet, I shut my eyes and everything [stopped].

Ray struggled during college even though,

> [A] professor said if you forget your notes get Ray's. He takes excellent notes. He just said I don't know what's wrong. I would consider you my best student but you can't pass my tests and it wasn't until now that I realize it's very possible when you read a multiple choice test - I could read the question wrong.

He was lucky because through his mother's efforts he knew early that he had mirror imagining or dysfunctioning, known now as learning disabilities. Others were not so lucky, Reba and Nan discovered something wrong after one graduated in the top three percent of her high school class, both earned degrees, and had successful careers before returning to graduate school. Nan's awakening came when,

> All I knew was that at every point in my life I had been able to get by and get through and do it well and at this point in my life I was not making it and it was terrifying. It was so frightening to sit there the entire

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> vacation - you're not going to do anything but fill out these forms and I would sit there from morning to night and at the end of the day I would not have those forms filled out and I couldn't figure out why.

Reba's problem became apparent while working for a government agency. Reba had to,

> Kind of capsulizing all of your investigations, findings and doing these reports and I would find that I would do really well at the investigation. I would do really well articulating verbally what it was that I found and how I could synthesize it and make it very logical but I couldn't take that information and put it in writing no matter how hard I tried. …In the course of doing that I realized there was something wrong. I was stupid; I couldn't do that.

As a result of these situations Ray, Nan, and Reba sought professional counselors, eventually were tested and diagnosed. Their feelings of inadequacy have not left but they are seeking accommodations to access information auditorily.

Help was perceived as something different from an academic accommodation. To ask for help is a complex process requiring an individual to: understand the disability, recognize the types of help needed, and analyze the previous conditions under which help was needed and received. Nan said asking for help involved,

> learning, there are skills that one can develop in terms of steps to follow. Questions to ask… There are skills one can develop and there are people all over this university. There are people everywhere who have this and you just go to somebody for help when you need help.

Developing "the steps to follow" included finding the learning resource center, using a tape recorder for lectures and studying, asking students for their notes, finding study partners, and talking to the instructor, "I try to meet with the professor to clarify things" (Kim). Participants needed advice on how and when to approach an instructor or navigate program requirements. As Nan learned,

> The thing to do is when I find myself floundering to go to someone and say what exactly do you want. Where can I take this? And pretty much know when I should do it. But it never occurred to me that I thought I needed to be able to do all of that on my own.

"Normal" students or "good" students did everything on their own without help. And yet "good" students know you need to get to know the instructor, let him or her know you, and that doing this will help your grade in many cases. In order to maneuver the program, Nan needed guidance on the format and content of an academic plan and where to locate information. She lacked a context for the required tasks. Nan found another student who "automatically, instinctively knew what to do."

Others learn how to utilize university programs like counselors and reading laboratories. Or finding people to proofread papers so often they learned the way the participant processed information. Mel said,

> There's a lot of times when my mind goes so fast that I actually skip words and not see them …just last night I had one whole sentence and half of it was one thing and half of it was another. So she said wait a minute. You've done it again. So she broke it up for me and we finished it out and then went to the next sentence.

Possibly with practice and self-reflection, Mel will begin to recognize these things himself. Nan reflected on how she organized material, by planning "every single step of everything…in her head because nothing comes naturally to [her]." This may seem natural when planning coursework for a doctoral program or candidacy exam questions but she had to plan even the most mundane tasks like waking up until they became habits. Big events were considered and mulled over as much as a year in advance. If Nan's advisor considered a discussion about dissertation topics premature before a final coursework plan, then Nan became frustrated and disoriented, until the advisor's appropriate time arrived. Organizational difficulties can be found in people with cognitive disabilities. Nan, has ADD, but similar processing difficulties could also occur with a Traumatic Brain Injury, learning disabilities, or alcoholism. Jed, a recovering alcoholic, described the task of analyzing a case study of a company's branches,

> I'd have to go back and look at the set we did the other day and then look at what we're trying to do today and I can't go from here to here. I've got to put them right side by side and draw a line and think about is this right and then write it down somewhere.

Jed was able to organize information about a company's branches only by laying them out side by side and drawing lines to and from key points. For other participants, advance organizers and visual prompts related to the material being read provided a frame of reference to attach written text to, making text on a page more meaningful. Mel used the machines and computers in disability services to compensate for his inability to read text correctly. Mel tried to, "set up a system where people like me can hear what the test is and then use a word processor [to answer the questions] …[then] put the answers into the reading machine and have it read back to you."

Cat provided a broader understanding,

> To be a student with a disability means you have to manage your time. If you don't manage your time well you will not succeed. It is a simple matter of fact because of the way the system is set up for the most part schools are not accessible and do not provide the accommodations that you need. That means you spend more time doing your work.

Cat is legally blind and reads by listening to audiotapes. Time management is very important considering she must track down textbooks prior to the beginning of a quarter to have them read by the first class. Cat has learned to compensate by beginning early,

> I couldn't wait till the second or third week to start doing my research. I knew I had to start day one. The first day of class [start] calling up people, getting people lined up, finding books, ordering books, looking for books. Asking people on the Net do you know of any literature for X, Y, Z? And getting all that lined up in a format that I can [use].

If the texts are not available, or readers delayed, Cat will not have access to the materials when the course starts.

### Communicating Accommodation Needs

The amount of information the instructor needs to know about the disability depends on accommodations and the nature of the relationship with the student. The quantity and quality of information divulged depended on two other factors, the student's comfort level with discussing the disability with strangers and the ability to self-advocate.

Disclosure is giving personal information about yourself to a more powerful other risking a change in the relationship or that information will be used inappropriately. The fear is, "when you tell people you have a learning disability for some reason that word is synonymous with stupid" (Reba). This fear motivates some to simply hand the professor a "sheet and tell them what it's about and then that's it usually" (Mel). Professors, Mel views as friends, might be told "a little more but not much more." Ray only brings up textbooks if he is having trouble securing one to be taped or the taping is not done by the first day of class. Cat notifies the instructor immediately after class registration hoping to secure the books to be taped.

Jed identified himself as having arthritis and a breathing disorder. Jed assumed instructors know "something is up" seeing him drag behind him a cart for his books and use his inhaler. He "hand[s] them a piece of paper Dr. X has filled out with several different things on it and an accommodation sheet." Reba and Kim speak to the instructor or arrange a meeting time on the first day of class, freely describing their disabilities, "I have this learning disability and it manifests itself in my writing and when I read" (Reba) and Kim,

> Tells them I am "in control" of my own asthma and that I have a nebulizer to use if I have a major problem. I also tell them that I should be able to notify someone if I need to be taken to the emergency room.

Reba and Kim disclose for permission to do things that students without disabilities take for granted, such as taping lectures and missing class when ill or the doctor determined the weather is too dangerous.

Three participants knew what to say, when to say it, and why the information they provided was enough. Other participants felt like Ray, after trying to make a joke of it, "I don't know what I really say to them. I just say I have real troubles." If a student has difficulty with disclosure, it is likely the student will also have difficulty communicating accommodation needs.

Ray felt that official documentation "breaks the ice for them. That's the cover your ass kind of thing that they [instructors] can relate to, paper." Participants felt it was their responsibility to break the ice then the instructor should ask questions. Some instructors asked questions so as "to know how they can go ahead and make class so I can be more involved" (Cat). Cat responded everything written on the board will have to be read out loud.

When the faculty member doesn't have any idea of the student's needs and part of the student's disability is an inability to clearly articulate needs and organize thoughts, a very frustrating situation can occur. Nan,

> would always leave her office crying because I couldn't get through to her what I wanted. I would go in and say I need to talk to you about …generals, what I'm going to do and she'd say no, what you need to do is finish your this, this and this and I'd say no, I really need to start ahead. I have to start thinking about things. I have to mull them over for as long as possible before …I didn't tell her all this but I have to consciously plan everything in my head. Every single step of every thing has to be planned in my head because nothing comes naturally to me. Nothing.

Visualize the exasperation the advisor felt with the student and the frustration the student felt with the advisor: Until Nan describes her need to plan to the advisor, the advisor will not understand why Nan persists in her desire to talk about things in the future when incompleted tasks exist. Nan is afraid to disclose any information feeling "it may be held against me" and that "telling everything just isn't appropriate in every situation." When the disability affects a person's ability to judge appropriateness, there are implications for the effectiveness of the accommodation communication. Crucial information for an effective teaching-learning exchange will not be received by the instructor.

Discomfort with discussing a disability can impede communicating accommodation needs adequately. Some participants maintained that professors have a right to know enough to fulfill the institution's requirements. Cat responded,

> Sometimes I feel like they're just being nosy and rude then I won't discuss it and it's not a point of I'm not comfortable talking about it. It's a point of I don't think that you really want to know. It's more of a power trip on their part.

Participants uncomfortable discussing their disability felt disclosure supplied others an advantage or power over them, because society views "disability" as being incomplete or abnormal. Mel consented to the interview hoping this work might do some larger good. Normally, Mel would tell no one,

> [When he] went to school you didn't mention that you had anything so I imagine that stigma is still with me. You always kind of want to do it privately saying here's the stuff. But if you can help other people then's when you tell one on one.

Jed, who is in constant pain from arthritis, expressed this sentiment,

> You won't hear me complain about any of it. ... If I can help someone through talking about it that's what I want to do. If I complain about it, it's going to get worse. I see people that complain about it and things just don't go well for them. If I talk about it, people ask me questions and I explain what I'm doing and how I'm living. If I can help someone through that I'm open for discussion.

He doesn't complain because he may be superstitious, fear bad luck, or ill will and distaste from people who want to hear stories of courage. Sometimes discussing a disability with someone who is uncomfortable hearing about it makes it seem like a complaint. In effect the stigma attached to disability still limits discussion making the whole issue of disability invisible.

Comfort levels are often boosted when self esteem is boosted. Reba found strength to discuss her disability with others from a professor who helped her believe her disability was not a shameful thing. Reba explained,

> It wasn't until I wrote a paper in which we were talking about good teaching, what was good teaching, what was learning. ... I reflected on my own life, about how I survived the education system with my own disability. ...She said you're an excellent writer, not only are you an excellent writer, what you have to say is worth hearing. ...So it took somebody that I really respected to tell me I was okay. That really made it okay and I have found that had given me a certain comfort level.

Participants comfortable with disability disclosure and accommodation requests were likely to transcend thinking of their own needs to advocating for others.

Advocacy is trying to persuade or educate those holding power to change their beliefs or actions. Nan felt it was important for her to advocate for students with disabilities because,

> I'm in the college of education and I see so many people who are completely intolerant of any difference. Student learners, kids should be one way. There's one way to learn and everybody should march lock step down this narrow road.

Nan became dedicated to increasing faculty awareness and bringing the discussion into the open, "I consider myself a spokesperson, by talking about it all the time ad nauseum." Kim spoke out in classes to add the disability experience to the discussion, "conversations have been experiential and usually in one of my classes to make a point about needs that aren't addressed by most people because they don't 'see' your disability." In addition to having invisible disabilities, participants are faced with instructors who do not believe that certain disabilities exist. Nan's advocacy included broadcasting information because, "I just thought it important that everyone know that adults have it also. So they'd know. So they'd look out for it."

## Importance to the Field

The stigma attached to disability is acutely felt by students with invisible disabilities influencing when and if they disclose. Not requesting accommodations when they are legitimately warranted or feeling guilty about requesting them because of the perceptions of others that an unfair advantage exists has serious implications for learning. Other areas of concern are: a) a lack of research on higher functioning adults with disabilities, b) increases in adults with disabilities seeking educational opportunities, c) the noticeable absence of disability during diversity discussions and d) the historical trend of placing non majority children in special education (Ross-Gordon, 1996). This trend affects adult educators who find these adults poorly prepared to succeed in higher education. Yet, they can be intelligent, misdiagnosed, or never provided with accommodations to facilitate learning.

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Presented at the Midwest Research-to-Practice conference in Adult, Continuing and Community Education
University of Missouri - St. Louis - September 22-24, 1999

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## A Piece of the Puzzle: John Ohliger, "Music Director: of Basic Choices

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A request to locate a specific song for a class prompted a discussion of songs and their uses. Someone wrote that before "a practical session [she plays] -Welcome to the House of Fun" (AEDNET, 8/17/98) and before a test the Police "With Every Breath I take I'm watching you." John Ohliger suggested the Center for Popular Music's address and a bibliography, "The adult educator's spring sing-a-long." Adult education literature has focused on music's (a) importance in the lives of adults and (b) impact on human development and society (Zanzig, 1936, Van de Wall, 1938; and Spofford, 1936). Despite the substantial role of music in the lives of adults, very little research links music and adult learning. Research studies have examined the relationship between music and adults but primarily focused on adults' (a) musical aptitudes, skills, perceptions and listening skills (Cooper, 1996; Myers, 1986; Young 1996); (b) public music education programs (Eicher, 1960; Gerkowski, 1965; Schwartz, 1961; Warren, 1959) or (c) motivation and participation in musical activities (Robertson, 1992; Spencer, 1996; Tatum, 1985).

The Highland Folk Center and its co-founder, Myles and Zilphia Horton have recognized the impact of music on social and political movements including music and the arts in the missions and curriculum to stimulate new perspectives. Learners developed confidence and pride in their cultural heritage, realized they had choices over their situations, and found hope through learning. Horton (1973) explored alternative methods of teaching and learning with diverse groups of adult learners and appealed to others to do the same, demanding, "The bars must come down; the doors must fly open; non-academic real-life must be encompassed by education. Multiple approaches must be invented each one considered educative in its own right" (p. 331).

Civil rights activist and educator, Barnwell (1993) incorporates the music of African Americans into workshops to: promote community development and diversity, heighten awareness of other cultures, and illustrate the impact cultural differences have on the human experience. Lieberman (1989) examined folk songs as political weapons utilizing music in the fight for equality. Simple songs such as folk music are accessible: any person can learn to sing them without any kind of musical training. Lieberman (1989) asserts that when people come together to sing they can create "a sense of unity and strength that might not otherwise exist." The People's songs or songs of ordinary people, function as weapons when they are used to "spread a strike, to drown out epithets of the opposition at a meeting, to build morale and attract publicity on a small picket line" (p. 81). In the social, political, and civil rights movements, music is engages adults so that they recognize and take charge of their situations. Music affects both the emotions and the intellect as Lieberman (1989) explains,

> …that cultural products were important in shaping people's world views; that people had to be affected emotionally as well as intellectually in order to change their political outlook; and that participation rather than passive consumption was critical to the process of changing consciousness and acting on that changed point of view. (p. 83)

Ungerleider (1987) selected music to raise awareness of the threat of nuclear war. He developed a songwriting workshop specifically for his study linking music and adult learning stating, "Experiencing emotions is but one step in a systematic process of consciousness raising. The expression of feelings, and personal thoughts, is a critical link between self-awareness and collaborative social action" (Ungerleider, 1987, p. 30). Music raised awareness of social issues and helped develop problem-solving skills as learners wrote an original piece of music to bring attention to the problems of nuclear war.

### Research Design

A phenomenological study was conducted (van Manen, 1990) asking, what it means to use music to enhance adult learning and adult education? John Ohliger was selected as an exemplary case (Yin, 1994); he has used music as a sense-maker and meaning-maker throughout his life. He is typical of many in adult education who use music for learning and education almost without thought, without having a strong musical talent, and without an awareness of how music enhances learning. Documents were selected from Basic Choices' lists with highlighted material relevant to music and adult education. We analyzed included Ohliger's unpublished memoir, articles, keynote presentations, bibliographies, and tapes. From a preliminary reading and discussion came these four areas 1) to support political activities, 2) to enhance the teaching and learning exchange, 3) to investigate as a data source, and 4) bibliographies. Data and investigator triangulation were used along with member checking (Patton, 1990). Ohliger responded to questions, read and commented on drafts of this paper making a few corrections of historical details. Individually we read and recorded reactions in a journal: questions for John, questions for our discussion, reactions, and relevant quotations. After sending questions via electronic mail, Ohliger responded by either answering our questions or referring us to some other document. We repeated the process with his comments and the additional material. Six themes emerged and became the coding categories. Separately we reviewed the printed and audio material, our reflection journals, and e-mail correspondence from Ohliger, for examples that fit the categories.

## Themes

Ohliger's work provides examples using music in a variety of adult education forums and an adult who used music to enhance his learning. The six themes are: learning style, personal development, teaching and learning exchange, community education, social action, and data source. As Ohliger (1997) writes, "I didn't realize, until I went through my personal and Basic Choices files for this memoir, how much of my life has been involved with songs, verse, and humor. What has it all 'contributed to [my] political development and experiences'? I'm still far from sure."

### LEARNING STYLE

The arts exist in and benefit all cultures and, "of all the gifts with which individuals may be endowed, none emerges earlier than musical talent" (Gardner, 1983, p. 99). Persons whose dominant intelligence is musical use it in areas other than those associated with music learning best through melodic and rhythmic activities. Their learning is enhanced when the material or information is set to music, by singing, playing music in the background, humming, whistling, or rhythmic activities such as tapping (Gardner, 1983). When asked about musical intelligence Ohliger replied, "No I'm not familiar with 'any' research on musical intelligence, nor do I think I possess a high degree of such intelligence. I should make it clear that as far as I'm concerned my interest in music is almost purely emotional, even the political music appeals to me on that level, as far as I can tell" (e-mail, 12/2/98). Ohliger has a natural affinity towards music as evidenced by his strong association with music. People with musical intelligence are drawn to sounds and rhythms, Ohliger doesn't just use music as metaphor but seems to think in rhythmic and melodic patterns defining his life and work as being a "tone poem" and organizing his recollections in a way consistent with musical intelligence. It includes using music as an organizational device, or to frame arguments about other issues as Ohliger does in many public talks.

"I can't read music. I can't play an instrument. I don't sing very well. But, looking back on my first 70 years, music has graced much of my life. Much of the time I find myself singing, humming, or whistling, softly or silently, to myself. I almost always associate music with good feelings--feelings of wholeness--in a fragmented personal and political world. I don't know what, if anything, it 'has contributed to [my] political development and experiences' But maybe putting down some recollections about the music in my life will help me to understand that contribution" (Ohliger, 1997). Ohliger defines "music broadly to include poetry and humor" going on to write that "all three partake of an essential rhythm. Perhaps this rhythm is even a universal. The beat in each of these forms may underlie the melody and harmony of our days (1997).

He was raised in an environment full of music. An early memory is of his mother singing the song, "My Pigeon House" which included a "hand rhythm" (e-mail, 12/3/97). Growing up, hymns such as "In the Garden" were sung by his grandfather's Calvinist congregation. Such hymns might have made understanding his grandfather's strict ways easier. His father sang in a barber shop quartet, read music, and harmonized with others while his mother played the piano. One example of Ohliger's musical intelligence was his training in the army to be a radio code operator. Morse code is rhythmic and as Ohliger describes it, "while learning the rhythms of the Morse Code, I had my first chance to march with a band. My favorite march then--long before it became famous in the 1957 film, Bridge over the River Kwai--was 'The Colonel Bogey March'" (1997). When Ohliger transformed from a liberal to a radical in the late forties, he chose his political affiliation based in part on music, "the Socialist Party's... Student League for Industrial Democracy was less attractive to me than the Trotskyite HITS (Highbrow Intellectual Tennis Society). HITS' facetious name and its emphasis on singing socials, but also hard-hitting political action, made sense to me" (1997).

### Personal Development

The link between musical intelligence and interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences is that all three deal with feelings and communicating feelings (Gardner, 1983). Gardner believes, "music can serve as a way of capturing

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feelings, knowledge about feelings, or knowledge about the forms of feelings, communicating them from the performer or the creator to the attentive listener" (1983, p. 124). Musical intelligence is manifested in individuals with musical ability, deliberate listeners, and those who have an appreciation for the beauty of music. Gardner notes the existence and benefits of the arts in all cultures,

> … the arts appear in roughly comparable forms in all known civilizations, and hence are pertinent to human development everywhere. Indeed, participation in the arts is so natural and integral a part of human growth that an understanding of this process should provide important clues to many pivotal questions of human development. (p. 23).

Ohliger has embarked on a life review through the writing of his memoirs using music as the organizing mechanism for this work. Songs have a way of reminding us of important personal or global events. This is "a safer and less distressing way …to write a memoir [by] focusing on the songs I had heard through the years" (Ohliger, 1997). Ohliger used different musical genres as tools for growth and change, as a form of inspiration, or therapy when feeling depressed. He found listening to country and western music helped lift his spirit.

In his personal and professional life, Ohliger used music as a symbol, "attempting to seamlessly unify truth and beauty. Despite what the Grecian urn in Keat's poem says, truth and beauty are not the same. Beauty in an urn or a poem can be absolute, but truth is so slippery that as soon as it's written down it's no longer true." Is this perspective transformation from a man who has stood adamantly by his views? From his memoir, music was the catalyst for some relationships, the glue for others, and provided him with a way to express his emotions. Ohliger expressed his love for his wife during their wedding, when John, Chris, and their guests formed a circle to sing the song, 'Somos el Barco.' (We are the boat, we are the sea./I sail in you, you sail in me.) Relationships were maintained and strengthened through the use of taped letters exchanged with friends that included "songs and musical comments" (Ohliger, 1997).

Music represented an expression of personal identity. As an educator for the CIO, Ohliger worked in factories for two years to have a shared experience with the workers he taught. He began to identify with fictional characters portrayed in radical songs, Jimmie Higgins and Bill Bailey. Like Ohliger, Bill "Bailey belonged to every radical party that ever came to be." While Higgins did a lot of "shit work" that brought "a modicum of safe attention" (Ohliger, 1997). Ohliger views his "massive, offbeat bibliographies" as "shit work" useful but undervalued. Introducing Ivan Illich with Kristofferson's line, "He's a walking contradiction/Partly truth and partly fiction" with meaning in the lyrics to both men (Ohliger, 1997). He hopes the song is played at his memorial service. Ohliger was introduced to the writing of Lao Tzu when visiting Everett Reimer in the 1980s. These writings have brought a measure of peace and reflection. The writings appeal to him because of the brief poetic passages, "Some people consider it an important aid in moving toward a better society" (Ohliger, 1997). The "Learning how to unlearn: Lao Tzu Potpourri, Lao Tzu Sampler" provides a way to gain insights into socially constructed western views of personal growth and freedom.

## Teaching and Learning Exchange

Music creates a "nourishing learning environment for adults" (p. 28) by enhancing the logical/mathematical intelligence (analytical, reasoning skills) (Brougher, 1997). Students analyze popular films, songs, and art for "specific themes and patterns" (Brougher, 1997, p. 28-29). Apps' (1996) connects learners to each other and the instructor by listening to a musical selection, writing an essay, and sharing it in class. This enhances personal development, literacy skills, communication, and critical reflection (Sgroi, 1992). Vella (1994) applies a holistic approach to learning by engaging "the mind, emotions and muscles" or the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills which should be blended or melded to enhance learning.

In 1966 while teaching at a community college in Canada, Ohliger and a colleague heard a high school band concert and had the "idea that it might be good sometime to start a class with five or ten minutes of rousing march music. It certainly would set an interesting tone and start the students' adrenaline glands going" (1997). His rationale was, "I assume I was trying to get students engaged or involved. So many students (and teachers) take a dry, detached view of learning, which drives me up the wall" (e-mail, 12/2/98).

As a visiting professor at the Universities of Southern Maine and of Wyoming he facilitated a seminar, "The Fictional Adult Educator," illustrating adult education in the humanities. A 200 page syllabus/bibliography was prepared containing "950 adult learning songs, 100 poems, 300 examples of wit and humor in adult education" (Ohliger, 1997).

The Adult Educator's Spring Sing-A-Long bibliography is organized in two parts: alphabetical order with descriptions and titles only by adult education category: adult basic education, aging, self-directed learning, teaching, and learning. These songs, from traditional religious to modern rock, aid the exploration of issues that

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many adult learners and adult educators face. The bibliography provides a resource for use in GED, ESL, graduate, and other classes utilizing discussion, and possible marketing ideas for programs. There is much here, "Songwriters, like poets, express volumes in a relatively few carefully chosen words. Because the expression is so brief, vast areas of interpretation and emotion are left for performers, listeners, and readers" (Ohliger, 1990). These songs "show that adult learning is an embedded, integral, basic theme in American and Western culture." (Ohliger, 1990).

The tapes containing group dynamics (WKRP on-Group Dynamics), and mandatory continuing education (WISHET talk 8-19-83 & Pink Floyd/on MCE Woody Allen, Apps & Ohliger, Telemant) would contribute to a trends and issues class. The Lao Tzu Sampler has Ohliger's voice speaking clearly and slowly making it a good listening and discussion device for ESL or literacy classes. The tapes "Beyond the cage," on sexual freedom, and "Phil Ochs," a tribute, would add to courses examining socio-political and cultural influences on education and learning. "Let the River Run", from the movie, "Working Girl" inspired Ohliger to call singer Carly Simon an adult educator asking, "Should adult education challenge class barriers and power structures?" (1989, p. 6). Billy Joel's song, "We didn't start the fire" encourages students to reflect historical moments turned into music. Ohliger states, "Aren't we all caught up in the 'information rage,' while searching for a story to tie together all the facts that constantly bombard us?" (1990, p. 5).

**Community Education**

Music facilitated emancipatory learning in three community education programs (Kaltoft, 1990). Kaltoft's purpose was "to enhance understanding of how music can be used to foster the learning process and how music serves as a catalyst for social action" (1990, p. 146). Music contributed to knowing by enhancing self awareness (1) through emotions, (2) through "expanded states of awareness", (3) by nurturing an intuitive knowing and (4) increasing individual and group awareness (Kaltoft, 1990). Practitioners can use music to build cohesiveness, group identity, and with learners who are embarrassed or hesitant to participate because of societal stigma associated with literacy and GED programs. As Jankovic and Edwards (1980) point out, "it is music that historically has been used as a means to express the drama of human experience" (p. 6).

Ohliger's community education activities included his first radio program of musical selections, entitled "The world of Dance," an attempt to introduce listeners to music used in professional dance. In 1973, at WORT-FM a community station he co-founded, Ohliger hosted "The Madison Review of Books" using the Beatles' "Paperback Writer" as a theme song. Community members could request a book to review. Listening to his other programs, there are many examples of music, fiction and non fiction literature to inform listeners on community and social issues.

Ohliger taught at a community college but left because the "board turned it into a an extension of school instead of the real community college" (1997). The new faculty thought they were developing a folk school, "An administrator who seemed to know the ropes…said the problem was…[they] were 'babes in the woods' (Ohliger, 1997). Like Horton, Ohliger wanted to be part of a unique approach to education, noting, "A real community college is not vocationally oriented but attempts to get people involved in community problems" (e-mail, 12/3/98). Ohliger used music as a way to establish a connection to the community and combine a heart and mind approach to education. He suggested to the student body of Selkirk College that a line from "a Doukhobor psalm titled 'Be Devout'" become the school motto. The Doukhobor's came from Russia to Canada for religious freedom, formerly owning the school's land. Many students shared this religious tradition and Russian heritage making the line "Best of all--Inquire" fitting for the college.

**Social Action**

Ohliger worked as a union educator, a democratic socialist party member, an anti war protester, and a civil rights activist. As a member of the young United Auto Workers union he attended the "education department's FDR-CIO camp" where they sung "rousing labor songs" (Ohliger, 1997). The songs were "important as organizing devices and as a way of encouraging a militant spirit" (e-mail, 12/2/98). A Pacifica Foundation radio station in San Francisco, was founded in 1940 by pacifist anarchists with the help of the Ford Foundation through the Fund for Adult Education. Ohliger started his radio show there, "Sing me a song with social significance." He did forty two fifteen minute shows mixing music with poetry and commentary on political and social issues such as Racial Prejudice, What are politicians made of? Private Enterprise, and The Bosses Songbook.

Ohliger is known for his campaign against involuntary adult education, "... this new found consciousness that more and more adults were being imprisoned by educational requirements I located the author, Ivan Illich. Illich, and his educational mentor Everett Reimer, ... the only persons at the time I could find who recognized the oppressive direction in which schooling was moving, toward becoming 'Another Brick in the Wall' for all people, young and old, as the rock group Pink Floyd put it later" (1997). "The Wall [exemplifies the problems associated with] situations where people are ...coerced into taking courses to, for instance, stay out of jail, get promoted, or retain professional certification" (e-mail, 12/4/98). At a conference on mandatory continuing education held at Highlander in 1979, "Frank Adams...tried a few words to the song he suggested, 'Why MCE?' based on the song 'YMCA' (e-mail communication, 12/4/98). Much of Ohliger's criticisms of the difference between the voluntary principle of adult education and the reality that much is mandatory prompted John F. Morris of the University of New Brunswick to write, "Your role as a 'Greek Chorus,' providing commentary on developments in adult education and adult learning, is an important one" (1997).

After earning tenure at Ohio State in two years, "I was awakened from the sleep of conformity" by the campus tear gas and the invasion of Cambodia (Ohliger, 1997). "The spirit of these times was captured in two songs framed around the impact of television: 'Watch World War Three on Pay TV' and "The Revolution Will Not be Televised' by Gil Scott-Heron" (Ohliger, 1997). Mike Gundeloy, a political activist, used "underground music" as a political tool in the struggles for free speech (Ohliger, 1997). In the early seventies, Ohliger became faculty advisor to the group, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, encouraging the use of songs to get media attention and to maintain spirits. In his words, "To get attention to the anti-war message in popular media, e.g., 'One, two, three, four I don't want you're fucking war,' and many other songs that did get played on radio stations elsewhere. And also for the same reason labor and radical songs were used. We sang them to keep our spirits up on marches, meetings, and parties" (E-mail, 12/4/98). The songs may have provided an unmistakable message to the media and the institution.

When we think of political songs, songs of the sixties and songs revived for use during the sixties provide a striking and immediate image. Ohliger (1997) writes about connecting "the notions of 'struggle' and 'love.'" He reflects on Pete Seeger's comparison of these notions by singing that "struggle is long but love is longer" and Harburg, the author of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" and "Brother Can You Spare a Dime" who quoted John Dewey's observation that controlling society's songs would make laws less necessary. Songs have an inherent political nature and the potential to capture the minds and hearts of the listeners causing them to reflect on social ills or personal moments (Ohliger, 1997).

Ohliger attributes Illich's demise in the public mind to the split between Freire and Illich. He felt they were necessary to each other representing "the two halves of radicalism that are so difficult to keep together. The halves that need constant readjustment and delicate balancing are: (1) a belief that there can be a just social order based on human rationality, and (2) a belief that there can be a good society based on spontaneous freedom" (Ohliger, 1997). Illich represented the spontaneity, while Freire emphasized organization. The relationship illustrated "in my simplistic terms by... the popular song "Love and Marriage'" (Ohliger, 1997). Ohliger believes that "The rational Freireans generally lack music, poetry, and humor. Their convoluted writing style has no beat to it" (1997); important components for social change.

### Data Source

Adult educators use literature as a data source for research on adult development, creative conferences, administrators, civic action and learning (Rocco, Spangler, & Boggs, 1998). Ohliger (1989) has analyzed popular media for insights into adult education. All of Ohliger's work examined here analyzed music, poetry, or humor and is useful as teaching tools in many forums. The results are bibliographies available from Basic Choices, seminars at universities across the country, and tapes for organizations by request, as he did for the Shalan Foundation in Berkeley, "Reflections through a social change prism" containing 110 political and popular songs from 1972 to 1993 (1997). He has also produced "samplers" for the University of Wisconsin library on a variety of topics from sexual expression to cats (Ohliger, 1997).

Ohliger began the newsletter, "Media and Adult Learning," that became The American Journal of Distance Education. It "often focused on music." He recalled a "discussion I promoted on the musical 'Jesus Christ Superstar' about its adult education implications" (e-mail, 12/4/98) which went on for several issues. Songs were used as metaphors in talks and articles. For a presentation made to the Northern Area Adult Education Service Center on the report "A Nation at Risk" a song from the 1890s was used, "Who put the overalls in Mistress Murphy's Chowder?" As each boarder in Mrs. Murphy's rooming house is investigated as the possible culprit, it becomes obvious that she left the overalls in the boiling pot after washing them. The presentation titled "Who put the question marks in Mr. Reagan's Chowder?" (Ohliger, 1983) made the point that by Reagan's extreme views in support of such a reactionary report he "raised substantive questions about its recommendations" (Ohliger, 1997).

Ohliger has examined the way conferences and night schools are treated in fiction and songs. In "Really Creative Conferences" (Ohliger, 1987) he argues that "Big 'T' truth is the goal of most people who write imaginative literature" because of this literature provides a fresh perspective on conducting meaningful conferences. The movie "Working Girl" has significance to adult education. Issues of power and gender caused Tess difficulties with her relationship and in the workplace when the heroine strives to be taken seriously for her intellect and contributions. Society diminishes the worth of her degree because she attended night school. The movie provides a catalyst for discussion on labeling and assigning worth to different forms of adult education, and diversity issues. "However, the invisible but unyielding class barrier remains. Adult education hasn't been able to remove it. Does the field con people into believing, as Tess does, that through individual educational efforts not only can one person find economic salvation but that through the same path the class barrier itself can be eliminated?" (Ohliger, 1989).

## Conclusion

Many lament the loss of the humanities as an educational tool. Yet when fiction, non fiction, and music are used to inform or stimulate discussion around topics many adult educators dismiss this as frivolous. Music can affect learners' emotions and may facilitate attitude change when working for inclusion and diversity. Ohliger has been dismissed as eccentric because as academics we diminish the worth of nontraditional methods of education. This is unfortunate because there is much to be learned from the simple voices, accessible language, and unorthodox educational tools. "'Comedy is a clue to life; truth sometimes comes to us first as a joke.' .... hope for the future lies in the melding of humor (including music and poetry) with the best of the left (politics) and the best of the new age (spirituality). In my dogmatic view we won't move toward a modest, sustainable society until we somehow find a way of bringing together these three approaches" (Ohliger, 1997) This paper may provide insights for instructors, researchers, and practitioners in adult education on how to use music to enhance teaching and learning, research, and practice.

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# Adult Learning Through Religious Music
# In an African American Church Choir

Michael L. Rowland, Ph.D.

## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand the contribution of religious music to the learning of a sample of African American adult choir members. The study sought to understand how religious music provides meaning for African American adults and in what ways that meaning influences the social, spiritual, cultural, political, and racial issues that they face in their lives. This study also attempted to determine whether religious music in the African American church encouraged or facilitated other types of learning.

## Introduction

This paper looks at the influence of religious music on choir members at a Baptist church in Central Ohio. No other institution in the African American community has had as much impact on the social, political, cultural, and spiritual lives of African Americans as the church with its unique history and heritage (Cone, 1970; Branch, 1988; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). From the days of religious gatherings on hilltops and revivals in open fields to the many million-dollar edifices of today, the African American church has played a significant role in the spiritual and educational lives of African Americans. In addition to its role as an important social and cultural haven for African Americans, the church has served as a refuge during the turbulent times of slavery and the civil rights movement. As Ihle (1990) notes, "the black churches served as the most far-reaching agencies of black adult education" before the civil war (p. 15).

The African American church, much like African culture, has been strongly influenced by the oral tradition. Walker (1984) defines the oral tradition as "the transmission of word of mouth, song, drum, and folk wisdom of the mores, customs, and religious rites of African peoples that persisted through the Atlantic slave trade and influenced the worship forms and patterns of Afro-Americans" (p. 48). Because of the strong oral tradition and use of oral teaching and learning in the African American community, music naturally became an important source of teaching and learning in the African American church.

## Review of the Literature

The literature of adult education reveals little about the learning activities of African Americans, and particularly those activities sponsored by the African American church (Briscoe & Ross, 1991; Ross-Gordon, 1991). According to a 1991 survey by the United States Department of Education, only 23% of African Americans participated in mainstream adult education activities. However, Briscoe & Ross (1991) point out a contrary picture of minorities in adult education activities. They state, "While the picture painted from an analysis of minority participation in formal programs of adult education historically has been bleak, rich descriptions of a long tradition of lifelong learning in nonformal settings can be found" (p. 588).

However, as Briscoe and Ross (1991) have pointed out, much of the research that has been published, "both on the history of adult education activities… and on contemporary adult education in the black community, appears to be more scarce than historical studies of adult education of blacks" (pp. 588-89).

Flannery (1995) argues that three of the main theories of adult education--"andragogy, self-directed learning, and perspective transformation"--focus heavily on the individual and do not recognize the value of groups. Flannery contends that adult learning theories must be mindful of the influence of social, historical, and economic roles in adult education. She states, "adult learning theories must acknowledge that people and cultures vary in how they learn" (p. 156). She continues by noting that adult learning theories "must become inclusive and give voice to all people and groups, allowing missing voices (women, working-class persons, persons of color) to narrate their diverse stories of how and where they learn, and about their values of learning" (p. 156).

Similarly, Ross-Gordon (1991) emphasizes the need for a "multicultural perspective" in the adult education learning research. She argues against a perspective that is rigid in its scientific orientation. She states,

> We must be aware of potential conflicts between the ways of knowing commonly accepted in our academic tradition and the types of knowledge that may be respected in minority communities; we must guard against assumptions that our scientific ways of knowing are more sophisticated and thus inherently superior. (p. 10)

Boykin (1983) argues for a holistic approach to learning that encompasses the use of spirituality, rhythmic-movement, and affect, among others. He contends that African Americans are influenced by a belief system that has roots in traditional African culture that influences their ideology and learning. According to Boykin (1983), there are nine dimensions to the African belief system. These include (a) spirituality, (b) harmony, (c) movement, (d) verve, (e) affect, (f) communalism, (g) expressive individualism, (h) orality, and (i) social time perspective. Boykin (1983) explains that, based on the belief system, music and dance are essential elements to life that will enhance one's mental health and well being. In addition, he contends that there is "a rhythmic orientation toward life: a complex and multidimensional recurrent pattern that typifies one's personal conduct and self-presentation" (p. 345). He proposes that, based on the belief system, this "may also require and imply different cognitive processes, different ways of knowing, different criteria for success, different intellectual skills, and different competencies from those in the Euro-American tradition" (p. 362). The belief system as Boykin described is commensurate to Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence.

Howard Gardner (1983), a developmental psychologist, contends that there are many ways of knowing. He believes there are at least eight different types of intelligence, which include (a) linguistic, (b) logical-mathematical, (c) spatial, (d) bodily kinesthetic, (e) intrapersonal, (f) interpersonal, (g) musical, and (h) naturalist. Gardner (1983) defines an intelligence as "the ability to solve problems, or to create products, that are valued within one or more cultural settings" (p. x). A cursory examination of the importance of music to African American culture and the many genres of music associated or identified as being created by African Americans may provide some additional insight into the theory of multiple intelligence.

According to Gardner, those persons whose dominant intelligence is musical learn best through melodic and rhythmic activities. Their learning is enhanced when information is set to music, or when music is played in the background. The concept of multiple intelligence and the work of Howard Gardner expand the lens of what we know about learning and what it means to "know." Gardner's theory is particularly noteworthy when exploring questions surrounding the intelligence of certain minority groups, and the cultural bias connected to many forms of intelligence testing is lessened when the plurality of knowledge and contexts of the learners are recognized.

## Research Design

This study used a qualitative, descriptive, and interpretive approach. Retrospective biographies helped me to understand inductively how the religious musical experiences of African American adults affect their learning. Van Manen (1990) explains that "the intent of biographic interests is usually the private, personal, and unique events of individual lives: biography literally means 'description of a life' (p. 71).

In-depth face-to-face interviews and focus group interviews were the primary methods of data collection. I used a semi-structured open-ended interview question format for the interviews. The study also included document analysis and field observation as part of data collection. In addition, I kept a personal journal throughout the study, in which I documented personal observations, theoretical issues, as well as methodological concerns as they arose.

The participants selected for this study belonged to an African American Baptist church in Central Ohio. The Baptist Church was selected for three reasons: first, was my strong religious affiliation with the Baptist denomination; second, was its historical background in the life of the African American community and strong presence in the civil rights movement; and third, was its history of strong music programs and programs of adult and Christian education. There were other justifications for selecting the Baptist denomination, as well. Among them was the fact that the Baptist church is the largest religious group within the African American community (Murphy, Melton & Ward, 1993) and yet, it has not been sufficiently studied. For example, as Martin (1992) has noted, "the academic, critical study of the Baptist denomination has not received as much attention as that of the African Methodist Episcopal Church" (pp. 26-27).

## Description of the Sample

Twenty-five African American adult choir members voluntarily participated in the study. They represented persons of various ages, with the majority indicating they were 50 years of age or older, and they all had participated in their current church choir from one year to thirteen years or more. Six males and nineteen females from the eight choirs in the church participated in this study. Of the twenty-five participants in the group, many (13) had little or no formal music training (0-1 year), while three indicated they had two to five years of music training, and nine indicated having had five or more years of formal music training. Ten participants in this group indicated they were college graduates, while twelve had some college education and two had some type of graduate degree. One person in this group noted that high school was the highest level of education they completed.

## Findings and Discussion

I used themes as a tool to understand the educative value of religious music for African American adults. There were four major themes discovered during the analysis of the choir members' data: (a) service to the church, (b) "you're not in it by yourself," (c) incidental learning, and (e) "music as a vehicle for teaching."

With regard to the first theme, **service to the church**, many said singing in the choir was their way of contributing to the church. For instance, one choir member said, "I just felt that [singing] was one way that I could serve in the church." Another member shared what singing in the choir meant to him: "It fills a spiritual need I have. A void in my life." One person shared she

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feels "like I give something back from singing God's music…I think you have to remember that when you're singing in a choir, that's important…You are serving God through song and you have to take it seriously."

The second theme was related to learning from the experiences of others, or as one participant described it, **"You're not in it by yourself."** The participants regarded religious music as educative, as an aid to guide, instruct, and cope during difficult and oppressive times, which enhanced their connection to their ancestors and cultural heritage. The participants spoke of learning from each other's emotions and experiences through the music. When asked to describe how religious music made them feel, a single mother who described herself as "struggling to raise my boys" said,

> I think religious music makes you feel like you're not in it by yourself. Like you can relate to the trials and tests that you're going through. And it kind of makes you realize that you're not the only one going through it. It kind of makes your spirit happy. You know it puts you on a different level. Kind of eases your mind and makes you relax.

Another participant, who could hardly contain her enthusiasm just recalling the feeling, tried to put into words the unique characteristics of African American religious music.

> Because a lot of our ancestors sung the hymns and gospel music that's what they would sing, you can feel their pain and their happiness. There's something about the music that just keeps us going. And that's just part of our culture, part of our life, the music.

The third theme related to **incidental learning.** Participants indicated that their taking part in a musical organization within the church was a learning experience. They spoke of learning to work together as a group, using interpersonal skills, and developing social skills as a result of their involvement in the choir. One choir member noted,

> Another thing about the choir, and with many choirs, you do fundraisers. So it's more than just learning music and fellowship in the choir. You sharpen up your business skills. And your social skills. Because you have to go out and talk to other people. And try to recruit, and raise money. In all those kinds of things, you learn something.

The fourth theme was music as **"a vehicle for teaching."**

All of the participants stated that religious music was an important teaching tool for them. Participants noted that music was able to reach and teach a variety of learners who may be at different stages in their religious and spiritual growth. They noted learning specific biblical stories, events, and characters from religious music. For instance, one male participant noted how music is a teaching tool in the worship service. He pointed out that music has a transcendental trait or transformative quality.

> It can move people and it can change them, as it did King David in the Bible. Music can be used as a vehicle for teaching. Because sometimes people learn

> easier from the music than they can from just reading the text. They pick it up that way.

Another choir member said, "Music is one [method of learning]. It's still words, but it's not a lecture, per se. It's a message and it's musical. So that could be one way of learning." Although religious music was seen as educative because it aroused emotions, there was no recognition of music as a control mechanism that might manipulate the emotions of the church members. In addition, the participants expressed a notable lack of concern for social action which was an important cultural message of early African American religious music.

## Implications

Religious music has played an integral role in the history and culture of African Americans, and yet there is little research that explores the educative value or its effects on the education of African American adults. Although each participant in this study thought of religious music as educative, what many described was that religious music is inspirational. Further research could investigate whether music is inspirational or educative and how they differ.

Spirituality, religion, and religious music are not isolated from learning; nor are they activities strictly confined to the church. Adult education programs that focus on understanding adult development and transformative learning could benefit from understanding the way that religious music affects various cultures, ethnic groups, and genders and identifying the influence of religious music on basic beliefs and worldviews of their adult students. Exploring personal beliefs through religious music would enable learners to become engaged with music in a way that could provide an opportunity to learn from one another. The potential for using religious music to expand critical thinking of basic beliefs and assumptions could foster new ways of thinking and viewing the world for adult learners.

Religious music presents an opportunity to discuss issues related to race and gender in the church and in religious music. For instance, how does religious music promote or discourage sexism or racism? The issues raised in this study are useful for several reasons: the study examines the learning experiences of African American adults; it provides insight into alternative approaches and sources to teaching and learning via the arts and humanities; it offers an example for exploring the use of religious music to empower individuals and groups for social change: and it contributes another perspective on the learning and educational needs and experiences of African American adult learners.

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# Music in Adult Education: A Review of the Literature

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## ABSTRACT

This review examines the extent and ways in which music is represented in the literature of adult education. Music in the adult education literature can be divided into four sections: (1) adults' musical skills, aptitudes, and perceptions; (2) music in social and political movements; (3) music and adult educators; and (4) musical intelligence. The conclusion will summarize the findings on music in adult education and its significance to the field of adult education.

## Introduction

Although interest in music has been sporadic in the literature of adult education in recent years, the subject of music in adult education is not new. In earlier discussions, Zanzig (1936) posed the question, "What can be done through the agencies of adult education to help make the most of the present possibilities of education through music?" (p.408). Based on his approach to teaching music appreciation to adults, Zanzig (1936) recognized the need for the continuation of musical activities from childhood to adulthood and encouraged sponsors of adult education to assist adults in a lifelong education in music.

Van de Wall (1938) examined the role of music and the arts in adult education and underscored its importance in society, but also noted its subordinate role in adult education. He maintained that "There is in education circles today some confusion as to the significance and place of music in Adult Education" (p. V). Van de Wall also examined the role of music in programs designed to provide musical experiences for the underprivileged, and contended that cultural development must be nourished but should emphasize characteristics of the locale to provide a meaningful cultural experience.

Although this review of the literature primarily focuses on music and adult education in the United States, there are two works (Jones, 1988; Adkins, 1981) that examined music and the arts and adult education, that are relevant to this review. Jones (1988) provided a comprehensive look at the role of arts in adult education in England and Wales. He argued that "there is clearly a role for adult education in expanding the opportunity for the creative involvement of adults, as well as maintaining those opportunities for appreciative and participative involvement" (p. 132). However, he questioned the role of adult educators in expanding adults' interaction with the arts, and advocated a self-directed approach toward music and a lifelong musical education for the learners.

Adkins (1981) examined the arts in adult education and continuing education in Great Britain. He sought to strengthen the role of the arts in adult education and established a cooperative relationship among musicians, artists, and adult educators. Based on a survey of the arts and adult education, Adkins recommended (1) forming closer relationships between arts organizations and adult education with regard to the sharing of resources, (2) enhancing the role of professional artists in arts education programs, and (3) using adult education as a way to provide greater access to the arts.

This review of the literature was assembled from an examination of adult education books, journal articles, reports, research studies, and other works related to the field of adult education. Additional fields of education such as music and the humanities that contain work relevant to adult education were also investigated.

### Adults' Musical Skills, Aptitudes, and Abilities

Much of what has been written about music in adult education has focused on the musical aptitudes and skills, or participation of adults in musical activities (Keenan, 1995; Holmquist, 1995; Spencer, 1996; Green, 1998). Studies explored musical skill development and examined the aging process on musical skills (Myers, 1986). For this review of the literature, I focused only on those studies that used principles of adult education.

Chen (1997) examined self-directed learning among a group of adult piano learners engaged in private instruction and how self-direction affects musical development. Using the characteristics of adult learners identified by Knowles (1978), Chen developed certain criteria used to determine self-directed learning among the subjects. He concluded that very little self-directed learning was taking place, and the instructor did very little to foster self-direction in the learners. Based on the results, one of Chen's recommendations for fostering self-directed adult learning was for instructors to incorporate improvisation into the music curriculum, allowing creativity to be pursued.

Based on the motivation theories depicted in Wlodkowski's Time Continuum Model of Motivation (1981) and Malcolm Knowles's Andragogical Model of Motivation, Mullee (1996) sought to develop educational materials to assist adults in enhancing their music listening skills and expand their musical knowledge.

Studies in music participation were also prevalent among the research on music in adult education. Conda (1997) examined a group of twenty adult piano students involved in an ongoing process of musical instruction. The researcher's purpose in studying the group known as the Late Bloomer Piano Club was to understand what motivated students to join this unique group and the barriers they faced in order to attend classes. Conda found there were five reasons that motivated adults to pursue piano lessons: (1) childhood events, (2) owning a piano, (3) life-changing events, (4) replacing another hobby with piano lessons, and (5) joining the Piano Club. However, the researcher noted the human condition as defined by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs also explained member motivations.

Spencer (1996) examined participation and attitudes toward adult community bands and found six conditions for participation: (1) intrinsic motivators, (2) organizational motivators, (3) membership standards, (4) repertoire/ conductor, (5) rehearsal and performances, and (6) quality.

### Music in Social and Political Movements

A review of the adult education literature reveals that music has been particularly useful in social and political movements, as it has been used to facilitate social change. Music was used to raise awareness of social, political, and racial issues, as in the labor and civil rights movements.

The Highlander Folk Center and co-founder Myles Horton, and his wife Zilphia included music and the arts as part of the mission and curriculum of the Highlander Folk School. It was through the inclusion of music and the arts that adult learners at Highlander began to envision a new perspective. Learners realized they had choices over their life situations; they developed confidence and pride in who they were as people; and most importantly, they found hope through their learning experiences at Highlander.

Guy and Candie Carawan also played a significant role in the musical life of the Highlander Folk Center. They became known for their research on the use of music rising from Highlander and the civil rights movement. Adams (1975) noted that Guy Carawan made music from the everyday experiences and situations found at Highlander. At Highlander, music became a form of communication for poor people who may have lacked the necessary verbal skills to lead a successful protest or demonstration.

Jankovic and Edwards (1980) examined the use of "locality-oriented music," which they defined as music "used as a means to express the drama of human experience. The primary purpose of such music is to bring people together, to communicate information and/or to make political and social statements about local problems, people, and situations." (p. 6-7).

Ungerleider (1987) explored the use of music to raise awareness of the threat of nuclear war. His work centered on a song writing workshop developed specifically for his study with adult participants. Ungerleider explains: "Both the emotive content of sound itself and the emotionally descriptive content of song lyrics are relevant to the affective components of nuclear consciousness raising" (p. 30). Ungerleider concluded that music has the potential to raise awareness. He noted that song writing aided in the development of problem-solving skills among the participants as they sought to write an original piece of music.

In another study, Kaltoft (1990), explored how music was used as a tool to facilitate emancipatory learning in three community education programs. Kaltoft's focus was "to enhance understanding of how music can be used to foster the learning process and how music serves as a catalyst for social action" (p. 146). The music in her study, primarily folk music, represented various cultural backgrounds of the participants. She concluded that music contributes to knowing in four ways: (1) by enhancing self-awareness through emotions, (2) through "expanded states of awareness," (3) by nurturing an intuitive knowing, and (4) increasing the individual and group awareness. She asserts, "more research is needed in multiple cultures about how music affects people's way of knowing, how it relates to individual and socio-cultural meanings, and if and how music assists in breaking with dominant cultural expectations" (p. 389).

Joyce (1993) studied the act of singing as an agent of change for oppressed women. She noted the importance of singing to empower individuals and groups. She states, "The physical process of singing is an integral one that connects our learning capabilities to our will" (p. 8). Joyce also found that singing songs that resemble the life stories of participants in an accepting environment can strengthen identity.

## Adult Educators and their Music

Noted adult educator Alain Locke (1936, 1968) wrote about music, the arts, and its importance to African-Americans during the Harlem Renaissance. He regarded the arts as an important means of cultural expression for African Americans and was supportive of artists in their work. He influenced the cultural development of the Harlem Renaissance specifically through his collections of, and writings on, Negro poetry, which helped to bring Negro poets to the attention of literary circles. Locke was important to adult education for many reasons but primarily should be recognized for his encouragement of adult educators to be more cognizant of the culture, history, and interest of African Americans in planning programs for African American adult educational programs. He strongly supported the inclusion of the arts in education.

One place where all persons can participate in music, whether they are musically inclined or not, is the church. Based on his observations and personal experiences in the church as a member and adult educator, Apps (1972) examined the importance of folk music in the church, asserting that "folk music may be overlooked as content for religious adult education groups… yet it is a rich source" (p. 67). Apps suggested that folk music can be employed to facilitate discussions of groups to raise questions and provide adults with better understanding of their lives and meaning. Music provides insights into situations and opens up a world of new possibilities. In the case of church or religious music, it has the power to transform a congregation.

John Ohliger, an adult educator and Director of the Basic Choices, a Center for Political and Social Options, writes, "Songs about Adult Education have a long and honorable, if unrecognized history. They go at least as far back as the mid-1800s when the poem "Learn to Live, and Live to Learn" was set to music. They continue right up to the late 1980s when the "GED Rap" appears on the scene" (personal correspondence). As a political activist involved with numerous causes in his lifetime, Ohliger championed the causes of oppressed groups, often using music in these causes. For instance, he found himself using music as protestation in his work with Vietnam Veterans who were opposed to war.

## Musical Intelligence

Howard Gardner and his theory of Multiple Intelligences is notably lacking in the literature of adult education. Although Gardner's theory and research have focused primarily on children, his theory represents a tremendous area for further research in adult education. Gardner's theory is useful in determining and enhancing multiple ways of knowing and promoting critical thinking skills and self-reflection. This theory could be particularly applicable in working with adults of diverse backgrounds. Gardner (1983) believes there are at least eight different types of intelligence, which include (a) linguistic, (b) logical-mathematical, (c) spatial, (d) bodily kinesthetic, (e) intrapersonal and (f) interpersonal and (g) musical and (h) naturalist in every person. Gardner defines intelligence as "the ability to solve problems, or to create products, that are valued within one or more cultural settings" (p. x). According to Gardner (1983), "of all the gifts with which individuals may be endowed, none emerges earlier than musical talent" (p. 99). The research on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence and musical intelligence continues to grow; however, more empirical research is needed on how this theory applies to adult learners.

Although literature on music in adult education has been limited, some attention has been given to this area. However, the state of music in adult education can best be described as Woode (1940) noted in his thesis on music in adult education programs at The Ohio State University: "Music as an aspect of Adult Education holds a position of prominence not recognized by the mass of educators or laymen" (p. 67). Music and the arts have received far less attention in adult education, despite the fact that Americans are aging, which leaves more leisure time for adults. Adult educators have an opportunity to assist in making music a priority in the literature and the lives of adult learners and not a luxury reserved for a chosen few.

## Implications for Adult Education

This literature review of music in adult education is an attempt to acquaint the reader with relevant studies and literature to expand the understanding and awareness of music and its role in adult education. Our understanding of what motivates and interests adults and how they pursue musical activities can enhance programs sponsored and taught by adult educators. As an accessible art form, music can be used (1) as a discussion technique to facilitate learning in the classroom; (2) as an opportunity for adults to explore various cultural backgrounds and influences and determine their effects on music and society; (3) as a way to expand our knowledge of other ways of knowing; and (4) as another perspective on the learning and educational needs of adult learners.

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# Expanding Educational Programs: Assessing Business and Community Members' Needs and Support for Community Education

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## Abstract

Community educational programs are often facedwith the challenge of meeting the needs of the community while maintaining the educational integrity of the system. This paper presents findings from a needs assessment conducted for a community education center and examines the case of one rural community in order to illuminate the challenges faced by educational centers considering expansion of facilities. The paper presents data from business owners and home owners that indicates an interest in expansion of educational programs and some willingness to provide financial support for expansion. Additionally, businesses and community members show interest in different types of degree granting programs and courses.

## Introduction

Educational agencies of all kinds are under increasing pressure to become more accountable in meeting the needs of their constituencies and to implement more effective educational programs that result in high levels of achievement and competence (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). Organizations are now being held to higher standards of accountability by their clientele groups (Braund, 1995). Indeed, community organizations now look to the consumers to determine their own needs, rather than imposing the will of the organization on consumers (McClasin, 1995).

Community educational centers must be particularly sensitive to changing educational needs of local community members (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). Community educational centers provide advanced educational programs to populations that often have limited access such programs. Typically, these educational agencies are faced with the task of determining the educational needs of the surrounding community and adjusting program offerings to meet these needs, while maintaining the integrity of the educational system.

The ability of educational organizations to change is generally contingent upon community financial support for such changes. The support of local businesses and community members for expansion of educational programs can facilitate or impede the progress of expansion. For this reason, many community educational agencies are incorporating an evaluation component into the planning process (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). These evaluations allow planners to determine the level of community support for expansion activities and provide a basis upon which stakeholders can make policy decisions.

This paper presents findings from a needs assessment conducted for a community education center and examines the case of one rural community in order to illuminate the challenges faced by educational centers considering extension of facilities. The Alpine Regional Education Center (AREC) is located in a rural county in Northern Michigan and currently offers classes to more than 700 students through a consortium of eight area colleges and universities. Like many educational institutions around the country, AREC is committed to develop its programs to meet community needs. It is in the process of realigning its programs to meet community needs and anticipates extension of its program and facilities. This study was conducted to examine the educational needs of local business owners as well as community members and provide a comparison of these perspectives. This study also included an assessment of the willingness of these groups to provide financial support for the expansion of these programs.

This study can serve as a prototype for other community-based programs that are considering expansion and plan to include an evaluation component in the process. Although there is extensive variance in the specific issues that are salient for a given community, the general issues which must be considered when an community-based educational agency anticipates expansion cut across community lines.

## Methodology

This study employed a large-scale mail survey because this method provides the advantage of uniform access to dispersed populations without interviewer bias (Salant & Dillman, 1994). The process of survey instrument development began with the formation of a Needs Assessment Committee consisting of AREC Board Members in order to identify and prioritize the continuing education needs of Otsego County. The Committee identified its information needs and the best methods of data collection.

Two surveys were developed. The first survey was designed for local business owners. It included questions of a Likert-type scale (1 = No Interest to 5 =Very High Interest) assessing their interest in having their employees take continuing education courses. Participants from businesses were asked to indicate which level of programs would benefit their business (e.g. associates degree, bachelors, apprenticeship courses, etc), when these courses should be offered, and which types of courses they would be willing to ask their employees to attend. Business participants responded to questions regarding expansion of community educational facilities and their interest in financing the proposed expansion. Businesses were also asked to rate the likelihood that they would be willing to reimburse their employees for taking educational courses and the extent to which they would be willing to give employees time off for attending courses.

The second survey was directed to Otsego County homeowners. The homeowners were asked to rate their interest in attending different levels of educational programs, when these programs should be offered and the types of courses that should be offered. They were also asked whether they would be willing provide fiscal support for expansion of educational programs. Both groups were also asked a series of demographic questions.

The survey instrument was mailed in January of 1998 to a population of 5000 homeowners and 730 businesses. A total of 813 surveys containing usable data were received. Of these, business owners and employers filled out 78 (9.4%), while household heads filled out 735 (14.7%). Although a sizable group of individuals returned the surveys, it should be noted that the overall response rate is low. The low response rate is due, in part, to the method used by the current study and lack of follow-up reminders. Therefore, precautions should be taken to generalize the findings to the population.

## Results

### Characteristics of Household Participants

The majority of household respondents reported that they work full-time (60%); retired persons comprised the second largest group (18%). The remaining groups made up less than 10% of respondents each and included: part-time workers (10%), unemployed (4%), and students (1%) . Most respondents had some post-secondary education. Only 16% of respondents reported having no education beyond high school.

The age of respondents was fairly evenly distributed, however, the 'younger than 25' category comprised only 2% of respondents. The largest groups, ages 35-44 (27%) and 45-54 (24%), combined to make up over half of the respondents.

### Characteristics of Businesses

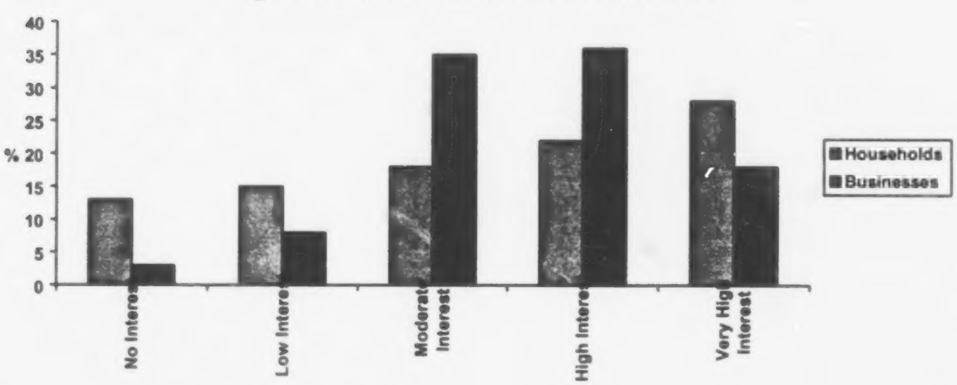
The largest group of business respondents were those businesses involved in the service sector (38%). Other businesses represented in the survey results included: retail (14%), manufacturing (10%), health care (9%), and tourism (8%). A significant number of respondents indicated that they do business in an area other than those listed on the survey (17%). Over one-third of these businesses employ between one and five workers (mode = 2). Fewer businesses (less than 5%) indicated employing more than 30 workers.

### Interest in Continuing Education Programs

The findings of this study show that general interest in all types of course offerings at AREC is high (Figure 1). On average, both business owners and homeowners indicated they had moderate to high interest (M=3.40, SD=1.37) in attending courses at the educational center or having their employees take courses at the center.

Household respondents' level of interest in taking college or continuing education courses were compared by their employment status, educational level, and age category. Findings show that interest in course offerings is uniformly strong without regard to employment category. However, there appears to be a correlation between the level of

Figure 1: General Interest in AREC Courses



education and interest in courses; more educated people indicated more interest in taking courses through AREC. In addition, older people showed less interest in course offerings than younger people did. However, a number of the older respondents indicated that they considered educational opportunities important for the community, even if they would not be taking classes. For example, one respondent wrote: "I am 80 years old and will not take advantage of any courses but I am highly interested in making them available to our young people."

Both business owners and household heads were asked to indicate the types of degree-granting programs that they would find useful. Findings in Figure 2 show that many employers and business owners indicated that associate degree programs would be useful for enhancing their business growth (66%), closely followed by enrichment courses (64%), and licensing and certification programs (61%). Almost one-third (30%) of business owners indicated that offering graduate level courses would be least useful for the employees of their organizations.

In response to a similar question regarding their personal interest in taking courses, household heads' interest in taking courses toward a specific degree was rather minimal. The type of courses reported as being of interest to respondents included enrichment classes (37%), graduate level courses (24%), and courses toward a Bachelor's Degree (23%). A comparison of business owners' interest in course offerings, household members total interest (Do they think that such a program*should* be available, even though they are not personally interested in it?) and household members personal interest (e.g. Would you be interested in taking these courses?) is presented in Figure 2.

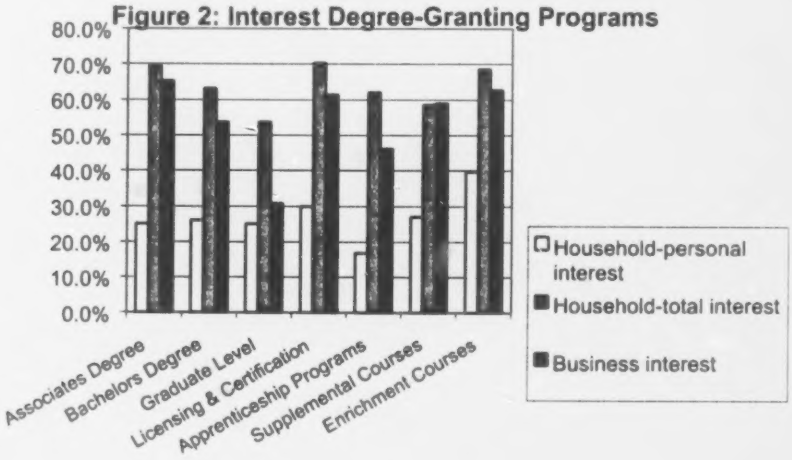


Figure 2: Interest Degree-Granting Programs

Employers and business owners indicated a strong interest in course offerings in fields such as computers and technology, communication skills, work ethics, and interpersonal skills, showing less interest in areas such as construction and trade skills (Table 1).

Table 1. Business Owners Interest in Courses for Employees.

| Type of Course | Description | Number (frequency) | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Communication Skills | Reading, grammar, writing, listening, telephone skills | 45 | 58% |
| Computer and Technology | Spreadsheets, word processing, E-mail, data bases | 55 | 71% |
| Skilled Trades | Tool making, using calipers, blue print reading, machining, electrician | 17 | 22% |
| Interpersonal Skills | Team building, leadership, team work, customer service, listening skills | 46 | 59% |
| Accounting Skills | Bookkeeper, budgeting | 32 | 41% |
| Work Ethics | Attitude, desire to work and learn, pride in work quality, self motivation | 47 | 60% |
| College and Technical Training | Business administration, computer programming, nursing, dental technician, pre-engineering, small business training, law enforcement, corrections officer, fire science, emergency medical technician, auto service technician, aviation mechanics | 32 | 41% |
| Construction | | 15 | 19% |

The household heads were asked to indicate the types of courses they would like AREC to offer. Similar to business respondents, computer science was the most desired type of course among general public respondents (52%), followed closely by business administration (42%), small business training (36%), construction trades (32%), and nursing (30%). Among general public respondents, the least popular courses included in the areas of public administration, personnel management, speech and drama, history, fire science, aviation mechanics, and physical education.

Willingness to Support Expansion

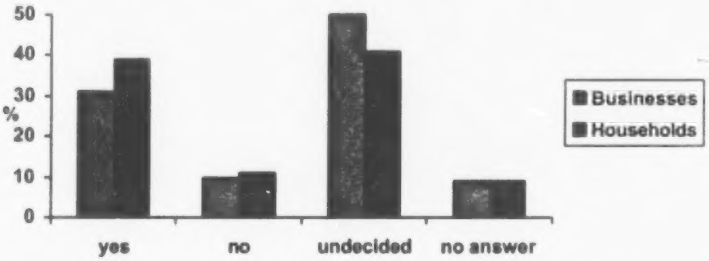
When households and businesses were asked: "If there was a need to expand the educational facility that currently exists, would you be willing to financially support that expansion?" most respondents indicated that they are 'undecided' on the issue (Figure 3). In both survey groups, approximately 10% responded 'no', while 40% of households and 30% of businesses indicated a willingness to provide financial support. The largest group remains undecided on this issue (41% of individuals and 50% of businesses).

If participants indicated their willingness to provide financial support, they were asked to indicate they type of support that they would be willing to provide. Among those willing to provide financial support, a millage was the most popular option (indicated by 43% of households and 33% of businesses), while 14% of both groups indicated a willingness to "assist in finding other sources of support."

Comparisons between respondents' willingness to support AREC's expansion financially and employment status, age, and education indicated that some groups are more willing to support the expansion of educational programs than others Among full-time workers, support for the program is strong; over 40% expressed willingness to support the program, while just under 50% were undecided. Most unemployed respondents were undecided on this issue. However, it is worth noting that no unemployed respondent answered 'no' to this question.

Students indicated a willingness to support the expansion. In general, respondents with more schooling were more willing to provide financial support. Whereas about 20% of retired people were unwilling, the remaining 80% were split about equally between 'yes' and 'undecided'. In analysis of the impact of age on willingness to support expansion, younger respondents tended to be the most undecided about their willingness to provide financial support, while those in the '45-54' age category were most willing (46.5%) to provide support. Although the oldest two age categories were least supportive, there were twice as many 'yes' responses as 'no' responses among those aged 55 and older. The following section will discuss the implications of these findings.

**Figure 3: Comparison of Willingness to Pay**



## Conclusions and Recommendations

The results indicated that both community members and businesses stated the need for several specific educational programs for members of the community. Thus, AREC should expand its' existing programs to include more courses on computer-related topics, communication skills, business and trade skills. Participants also discussed distinct preferences for the times at which the courses should be offered. Specifically, respondents suggested that they would be more likely to attend courses during the fall and winter seasons, and courses that are held in the evenings.

The findings indicate mixed support for funding the expansion of activities and facilities. It is therefore recommended that a number of options should be explored for funding program expansion at AREC. These options could include a millage, tuition and fees, and grants from outside sources.

This study has several important implications for community education research and practice. First, the methods and analyses presented in this evaluation provide an exemplar for other educational agencies interested in determining the needs of a surrounding community and the willingness of the community members and business leaders to support enhancement of educational facilities. That is, this paper provides a guide for the types of questions that might be asked by future needs assessments in other communities. Second, results of this study provide insight into the attitudes of businesses and community members toward community education programs and how these two groups compare to one another. Although it is acknowledged that this study provides the perspective of only one rural community, the results presented in this study allow similar communities to be prepared for the challenges they will face when considering expansion of community educational facilities.

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Acknowledgement: This study was carried out under the auspices of the Alpine Regional Educational Center (AREC) utilizing the expertise of the committed individuals who served in the needs assessment committee and the AREC Board of Directors. The authors would also like to acknowledge Jack Middleton, County Extension Director and Phil Alexander, District Extension Agent, Michigan State University Extension for their help in data collection for this study.

# A Critical Review of Teaching Belief Research: Implications for Adult Education

Edward W. Taylor

## Abstract

Exploring the nature of teaching beliefs and how they shape practice has been given serious attention in the K-12 field over the last twenty years. However, the field of adult education offers little research, despite the practical and theoretical work about beliefs in general by Brookfield, Mezirow, and Argyris and Schon. By looking critically at the research from the K-12 field one finds that adult education research needs to problematize taken for granted assumptions about beliefs and develop a deeper awareness of teaching beliefs and the impact they have on training future adult educators.

## Introduction

Teaching beliefs are important concepts when attempting to understand teacher thinking, thought processes and classroom practices. They act as representations of reality and serve as a basis for action in the classroom (Pajares, 1992). Researchers in the field of K-12 teacher education have come to the conclusion that how and what teachers believe have a tremendous impact on their behavior and is assumed by many to "be the clearest measure of a teacher's professional growth" (Kagan, 1992, p. 85). Furthermore, since the mid-1980's there has been a significant shift in the K-12 teacher education field, both research and program development, from an emphasis "on skills and behavior in favor of an emphasis on the formation or transformation of teacher thinking ... [and] beliefs" (Richardson, 1996, p. 110). However, when exploring teacher beliefs in the field of adult education one finds little research taking place as well as little discussion of what graduate programs in adult education are doing to address the importance of teaching beliefs in the training of adult educators. This omission is of significant concern because one of the fundamental tasks of adult education is challenging beliefs systems (Brookfield, 1996; Mezirow, 1991; 1996). At the same time little is known about the nature the adult educator teaching beliefs and how they shape practice. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is threefold (a) to present a critical review of research on teaching beliefs; (b) to explore its relationship to transformative and reflective models of adult learning (Mezirow, Schon, Brookfield); (c) and to identify the implications it has for adult educators and the practice of educating future teacher's of adults.

## Defining Beliefs

Belief as a concept are difficult at best to get a handle on, let alone teacher beliefs. They come under a variety of other aliases such as personal knowledge, attitudes, ideology, conceptions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, perspectives, schemas, rules of practice just to name a few (Mezirow, 1991; Pajares, 1992). The greatest challenge seems to be in separating the concept of beliefs from that of attitude and knowledge. Research on teacher attitudes was most prevalent between the 1950 to 1970, when teacher beliefs started to get more attention. Attitudes were seen as more affective and temporal in nature. Knowledge on the other hand, was believed to depend on a condition of truth, based on consensus by others. Kagan (1992) however, saw most teacher professional knowledge as belief, because as "a domain, teaching is characterized by an almost total absence of truths.... Each classroom of students and each lesson represent such unique contexts that the correct analysis and solution of a particular problem are neither predictable nor obvious" (p. 73-74).

Belief itself is defined in a variety of ways, for example by Sigel (1985) who defined it as "mental constructions of experience—often condensed and integrated into schemata or concepts" (p. 351) that are believed to be true and guide behavior. Dewey (1933) described belief as a form of thought that "covers all the matters of which we have no sure knowledge and yet which we are sufficiently confident of to act upon and also the matters that we now accept as certainly true, but which nevertheless may be questioned in the future" (p. 6). In an educational context beliefs include variety of attributions, such as: teacher efficacy (confidence in affecting change and carrying out instructional task), epistemological beliefs (nature of knowledge), student performance, beliefs about self-concept and self-worth, and beliefs about content and subject matter (Pajares, 1992). The origin of these beliefs seem to be the result of years of exposure to cultural images of teaching; of instructional modeling by teachers; interaction with parents; and participation in teacher education programs (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). Britzman (1986) describes beliefs as "implicit institutional biographies—cumulative experience of school lives...All this contributes to well-worn and commonsense images of the teacher's work." (p. 443).

## Nature of Teaching Beliefs

Beliefs play a significant role in determining how we organize knowledge and information and are essential to helping individuals adapt, understand, and make sense of themselves and their world (Schommer, 1990). This is particularly the case in teaching, which by its very nature is full of uncertainty and ambiguity, demanding of teachers to "create their own [beliefs], in the form of a personal cohesive pedagogical system that they support without reservation." (Kagan, 1992, p. 80). Initially there was a strong assumption that there was a direct causal relationship between belief an classroom practice. Studies in the area of reading/literacy support the "notion that teachers do posses theoretical beliefs towards reading and that such beliefs tend to shape the nature their instructional practices" (Fang, 1996, p. 52). However, other studies demonstrate an inconsistency between beliefs and practice, such that the challenges of classroom teaching often constrain the teacher's ability to provide instruction that are congruent with their beliefs. For example, research revealed that even though a teacher's beliefs on reading were consistent with a hypothetical lesson plan, they lacked consistency with her instructional practice. These studies seem to suggest that even though teachers can espouse a particular belief, their actions are governed and constrained by the context of their classroom. The most current conception is that the relationship is interactive, such that beliefs tend to guide action, and action (through greater experience and reflection) tends change and add new beliefs (Fang, 1996).

Research has shown that teaching beliefs develop early in life and tend to self-perpetuate and often persevere against a variety of contradictions caused by experience, schooling, time, and reason (Nespor, 1987). Green (1971) suggest that contradicting beliefs are protected from each other by their location in different beliefs clusters or systems, and that there is little "cross fertilization" among the different clusters of beliefs. Unless contradicting beliefs are explored together it is most likely that the inconsistency will remain. This apparent inconsistency can also be seen in the greater valence given to some beliefs over others, much of which seems to be the result of the centrality of beliefs to the individuals identity. Also, "belief change in adulthood is a relatively rare phenomenon, the most common cause being a conversion from one authority to another or gestalt shift" (Pajares, 1992, p. 325).

The research on teaching beliefs has centered predominantly on beliefs of students entering the profession of teaching. Most students are found to be optimistic about teaching with a sense of

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participating in public service, they believe that the best way to become a teacher is through experience and their beliefs are generally liberal and humanistic in orientation. Teaching is seem as fairly simple and mechanical with an emphasis on memorization and passing on knowledge to their student (Richardson, 1996). Furthermore, those that come with craft (personal) knowledge of teaching are confident such that they believe they know how to teach and little is required to get started (Weinstein, 1990). Weber and Mitchell (1966) analyzed drawings made by new and experienced teachers in an effort to understand their individual conceptions of a teacher. They found the most prevalent image to be a white nurturing female teacher instructing in a typical didactic manner in the front of the classroom. In addition, studies have shown that when it comes to beliefs regarding diversity, entering teachers tend to be somewhat conservative, individualistic in orientation and have an underdeveloped sense of the role of content and context (Paine, 1989). Also, beginning teachers seem to place a greater emphasis on the personality of the student and the teacher as being significant to learning instead of pedagogical skills or subject-matter knowledge (Sugrue, 1996).

Even though these studies portray an undifferentiated perspective of teaching beliefs, studies reveal that beliefs vary in intensity and character across entering teachers. This variation is also seen in studies that compared nontraditional students with traditional students. Nontraditional students who were parents were found to frame their understanding of teaching based on their experience with their own children and those nontraditional students who were not parents had conceptions of teaching rooted in their most previous work experiences. On the other hand, traditional students framed their conceptions of teaching around prior schooling experiences. Other studies show that nontraditional students recognize the complexity of teaching more so than traditional students. For example, traditional students believed that assessment of learning could be determined by simply viewing classroom behavior (e.g., enjoyment by students implied that learning was taking place), whereas nontraditional students believed that examining student work was the most appropriate method for determining student learning (Richardson, 1996).

When it comes to changing beliefs there is much debate among researchers as to the difficulty and the possibility of change. For example, studies show that preservice teachers do not necessarily develop new perspectives about teaching while in a teacher education program, they simply become more knowledgeable at defending the beliefs they already possess. Two areas identified by research to have a significant impact on belief change are schooling and classroom experience. Long term pre-service education (a year or more) with an emphasis on personal examination of beliefs appears to initiate some change. The question remains about the degree or significance of the change (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon, 1998). When it comes to the impact of teaching experience on beliefs, findings reveal that new teachers become less humanistic and more custodial over time in their relationship to students (Richardson, 1996), however they see students as more trustworthy even though experienced teachers sense of efficacy tends to decrease (Pajares, 1992).

## Adult Educator Teaching Beliefs

When exploring teacher beliefs in the field of adult education, one finds little investigation taking place. Most of the work is conceptual in nature with little emphasis on the empirical. On a practical level we find the work of Argyris and Schon's (1974) theories-in-use, Brookfield's critically reflective practice, and Mezirow's (1991; 1995) transformative learning theory. Even though these authors are quite effective at talking about concepts that seem related to teaching beliefs, their emphasis is on the purpose and practice of reflection, with little attention is given to the nature of what is being reflected upon, particularly in relation to the teaching belief research. Brookfield (1995), for example, has made a significant contribution in the area of critical reflection, particularly how teachers can become more effective at developing a deeper awareness of the assumptions about teaching and learning that frame their practice. The closest he comes to grappling with the ambiguities associated with teaching beliefs is found in his description of different categories of assumptions, that of paradigmatic (basic structuring axioms), prescriptive (what ought to happen in a particular situation) and casual (how things work in teaching). Even though there is a real appreciation on his part for the challenges associated with changing assumptions about teaching, which seem similar to characteristics used to describe teaching beliefs, Brookfield's conclusions are grounded in personal experience and based on anecdotal evidence. Mezirow's (1991;1998) transformative learning theory is also centered on the idea of changing beliefs, in particular the learning process of paradigmatic shifts (frame of reference). Beliefs are seen as subcomponents of a frame of reference, a part of meaning schemes— "sets of immediate specific expectations, beliefs, feeling, attitudes and judgments that tacitly direct and shape a specific interpretation and determine how we judge, typify objects and attribute causality" (p. 5). Even though there has been significant research on transformative learning, particularly paradigmatic change, only minimal attention has been given to identifying and exploring the process of change at meaning scheme or belief level (Taylor, 1998; 1999). Possibly the lens of transformative learning theory is to large and general in its perspective to understand the complexity and subtle nuances associated with change in personal beliefs. A third conceptual model that is informative about the role and change of beliefs is offered by Argyris & Schon (1974). They introduce the concept of theories-use which "include knowledge about the behavior of physical objects, the making and use of artifacts, the marketplace, organizations, and every other domain of human activity. In other words, the full set of assumptions about human behavior that function in theories-in-use constitutes a psychology of everyday life" (p. 7-8). They are similar to beliefs in that theories-in-use influence and govern human behavior and provide a sense of constancy to one's world view. The goal of a teacher educator is help preservice teachers develop a deeper understanding of their theories-in-use about teaching and learning (reflective practice) and introduce them to new theories of action to better inform their practice. A weaknesses in these three models is that the fail to explore the complexity associated with teaching beliefs, by simply grouping related components (e.g., knowledge, attitudes, feelings) under one heading and not exploring their relationship to each other. In particular, research is starting to show the deep interrelationship that exist between beliefs and feelings (Taylor, 1998). Furthermore, they overlook 30 years of research involving hundreds of studies on teaching beliefs. Despite this oversight, these models offer much to the field of teacher education. They provide a possible theoretical framework for understanding the process of change in teaching beliefs, an area that the teacher education field has not given adequate attention.

From an empirical perspective there have been a small number of studies in adult higher education about the nature of teaching beliefs. For example, Dirkx and Spurgin (1992) were interested in understanding how teachers structure their learning environment was shaped by what they believe to be true about their adult learners. This study involved extensive interviews with six practicing ABE teachers augmented with roughly 150 hours of classroom observation. The findings reveal that teacher use their beliefs about students to make sense of what happens in the classroom. In particular those beliefs involving their psychosocial and academic needs and less so about ability/capacity, had the most influence on shaping teacher classroom practices. "It is possible to conclude that the implicit theories the teachers in this study use to guide their classroom practices reflect a "deficit perspective...." (p. 37). Furthermore, age, ethnicity, and gender and other characteristic represented only a small portion of the teacher's description of student attributes. This findings seems consistent with K-12 research that teachers, particularly entering and preservice teachers, believe that personality, not issues of difference, have the most affect on teaching (Avery & Walker, 1993).

Pratt's (1992) conducted a cross-cultural investigation of different conceptions of teaching. The researchers interviewed 253 adults and teachers of adults across several societies: The People's Republic of China, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the United States. The interviews were supported with observations of some participants. Conceptions of teaching were defined as the interplay of actions (had causal relationship to learning), intentions (what they were trying to accomplish), and beliefs (expressed as "causal or normative propositions"). In essence, beliefs inform intentions which guide action. The study revealed five distinctively different models of teaching, each capturing the essence of participants' individual responses. The findings more relevant to this paper highlight three points about teaching beliefs, such that: (a) learners are impacted as much by teacher beliefs as they are by their actions and intentions; (b) teaching beliefs are culturally bounded, framed by political perspectives, social values, and different ways of knowing; (c) most revealing about teaching beliefs was the participants conception of evaluation and assessment of learners. "It provided a window on what they believed about knowledge, learning, and the purposes of adult education in their context." (p. 218).

Menges and Rando (1989) use Arygis and Schon's theoretical framework to explore the relationship between espoused and implicit theories of teaching held by graduate teaching assistants. By exploring two questions, the participants conception of teaching and their reaction to a specific classroom problem, the researchers found support for the action science premise that "suggest that a lack of correspondence, that is, a gap between espoused theory (expectations and theory-in-use (inferred through responses to situations), is the norm of human behavior and the use of tacit or untested assumptions to diagnose or explain inconsistencies is common." (p. 57). Hughes (1993) expanded on this research by using this same approach on community college teachers, but in addition explored differences in assumptions held about traditional and nontraditional students. Her study was consistent with Menges and Rando and in addition she found that the teachers held more positive perceptions of nontraditional students assuming they were more motivated and better prepared for class.

A more recent study involved an exploration into how a group of community college teachers, taking part in a curricular integration project is guided by their teaching beliefs (Dirkx, Amey, Haston, 1999). This year long action research study involved weekly meetings, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews with five developmental education teachers. The authors found that the teachers "approach curriculum integration largely through the lens of their respective disciplines, a position which both reinforces and is reinforced by the organizational structures within which they practice" (p. 99). Even though the teachers' curriculum in this study tended to stay subject-bounded (e.g, science, math), sharing took place across content areas involving teaching skills and how curriculum could be made more student relevant. These findings seem consistent with K-12 research, such that teaching beliefs concerned with a teacher's discipline (subject area) reflect central beliefs of practice and are less flexible and more difficult to change (Pajares, 1992). Also, the more teachers develop a deeper understanding of their subject matter, which is often found among teachers that teach single subjects (history, math, etc..) as opposed to elementary teachers who teach multiple subjects, the more the subject matter tends to have significant impact on their ideas about planning (Richardson, 1996).

These studies offer a good beginning, but fall short: (a) in presenting an adequate understanding about the nature of adult teaching beliefs, (b) in building upon related research; and (c) exploring the implications for practice. More specifically, they relied predominantly on espoused beliefs explored outside of context of their practice. They overlooked the impact of time (memories shift over time) and context (in what setting and with whom shapes the responses of the participants) on teaching beliefs. Granted a couple of studies were augmented with observation, but it was not clear how often the observations were conducted and how in the data analysis they were used to support the findings. Also, all these studies take a general approach to beliefs about teaching and overlook what is unique about the teaching of adults.

## Implications and Conclusion

The research on the teaching beliefs in the K-12 sector offers much insight and guidance into the study of teaching beliefs in adult education. By building on this previous research we can more effectively explore of what is unique about beliefs involving the teaching of adults. Adult educators usually begin the practice of teaching adults quite differently to how teachers are trained in the K-12 sector. Understanding the development of beliefs about teaching adults will help educators more effectively prepare future adult practitioners. Secondly, research on beliefs in general need to recognize that retrospective investigative methods on espoused beliefs are quite limiting. Research from the K-12 field has shown there is a clear lack of consistency of what someone espouses about teaching and how they actually teach in the classroom. Thirdly, researchers' in the field of adult education need to build upon previous research on teaching beliefs from the K-12 field instead of duplicating what has already been done. This means engaging the literature in-depth whereby we begin to ask questions that contribute to both fields of study. Fourth, there is a need to take into account previous methodological concerns identified by prior research. More specifically, this means that interviews need to be use in concert with observations of classroom behavior to augment espoused beliefs. Furthermore, life history and narrative research methods should be explored. Finally, and most significantly there is a need to problematized often taken for granted assumptions about the exploration of teaching beliefs. It means asking questions, such as: Does becoming aware of one's teaching beliefs result in someone becoming a better teacher? Does maintaining a reflective practice make one a more effective teacher? and Does developing insight into one's teaching belief results in greater learning for students? By exploring these questions and others along with a thorough understanding of the K-12 research on teaching beliefs much can be learned that will be helpful to preparing future adult educators.

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# Women "Teaching across Borders" for Social Change in Adult Education: The Interconnecting Role of Culture and Spirituality

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***Abstract:*** *This qualitative study examined how spirituality is renegotiated and informs the social change work of a purposeful sample of 13 women adult educators. Findings reveal five themes of spiritual experience as described by the participants: (1). spirituality as a spiral process (2) interconnectedness/wholeness; (3) experiences of a perceived "higher power" (4) the development of authentic identity; (5) a moral responsibility to work for social change. Spirituality in relationship to educational practice is briefly discussed.*

Teaching for social change is the work of passion for many adult educators. Indeed, it is important work, and the role of adult education in responding to the educational needs of a multicultural society is being discussed in many adult education circles —in feminist and critical pedagogy, and in considerations of how adult educators can challenge systems of power, privilege, oppression, and colonization, and "cross borders" of race, gender, class, national origin in this era of globalization (Hayes & Colin, 1994; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1997; Tisdell, 1998; Walters & Manicom, 1996). There is acknowledgment that teaching across these borders for social change is difficult, requiring a willingness to deal with conflict, resistance, strong emotions, as groups engage in critical dialogue and hopefully move to social action. What is missing from the literature is attention to how underlying spiritual commitments influence the motivations or practices of adult educators doing this border-crossing work. This is somewhat surprising, since almost all who discuss teaching for social justice cite the important work of Paulo Freire, who was a deeply spiritual man strongly informed by the liberation theology movement of Latin America (Freire, 1997). Clearly there are both male and female adult educators who are attempting to challenge power relations based on gender, race, class, and culture, and are motivated to do so because of their spiritual commitments. But many are women guided by feminist and antiracist educational perspectives, who have also had to re-negotiate their spirituality in light of having been raised in patriarchal religious traditions. ***In light of the lack of adult education literature that deals with women, spirituality and social justice, the purpose of this study was to examine how spirituality influences the motivations and practices of a multicultural group of women adult educators who are teaching across borders for social change, and who grew up in a particular religious tradition, and have renegotiated a more relevant adult spirituality.***

With the exception of adult religious education, the literature within the field of adult education that directly discusses spirituality is limited. Perhaps this is because spirituality is an elusive topic. Or, perhaps academics and adult educators for social justice are wary of being associated with it. After all, many injustices have been done in the name of "religious righteousness." Indigenous populations have been decimated and colonized by those that think they have a market on religious Truth; women have been relegated to second-class citizenship in the name of many patriarchal religions. In spite of these horrors and the dangers of imposing a religious agenda, there is a spirituality that underlies the work of many adult educators for social change, as is obvious by the work and underlying commitments of activist/educators such as Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Dorothy Day. Black feminist educator, bell hooks (1994) discusses the importance of spirituality in guiding her own educational practice for social change; Hart and Holton (1993) note that it offers hope to emancipatory adult education ventures. Virtually all who do the work of teaching across borders, warn of the dangers of imposing a religious agenda; yet it seems there is a place for spirituality in doing the healing work of social transformation. This study is an attempt to begin to add to the literature relating to the interconnection of spirituality, culture, and social justice among women adult educators.

## Methodology

From a research perspective, this qualitative research study was informed by a poststructural feminist research theoretical framework, which suggests that that the positionality (race, gender, class, sexual orientation) of researchers, teachers, and students affects how one gathers and accesses data, how one constructs and views knowledge, as well as how one deals with "crossing borders" in research and teaching. With this as a guiding principle, this first phase of this ongoing research process was interpretive or phenomenological. There were 13 participants (3 African American, 2 Latina, 6 European American, 2 Asian American). Criteria for sample selection were that all participants: (1) be women adult educators "teaching across borders" for social change either in higher education or as community activists; (2) have grown up and be educated in a specific religious tradition as a child, and attend services at least once a month through the time they were an adolescent; (3) note that their adult spirituality (either based on a re-appropriation of the religious tradition of their childhood, or a different spirituality) strongly motivated them to do their social justice work. All participants participated in a 1.5-3- hour taped (and later transcribed) interview. Questions focused on how their spirituality has changed over the years, motivates and informs their adult education practice, and relates to their own race/ ethnicity, and cultural background. Many participants also provided written documents of their own writing that addressed some of their involvement in social action pursuits and/or issues related to their spirituality. Thus, data collection were methods were interviews and documents. Data were analyzed according to the constant comparative method (Merriam, 1998).

## Findings

As an introduction to the findings, it is interesting to note some significant commonalties among participants that were not specific to the criteria for sample selection. First, while all of these women grew up in a specific faith tradition, none of them were currently active participants in their religion of their childhood. Secondly, all of these women, including the 6 white women, have personal experiences of marginalization. Obviously, the 7 women of color experience this based on their race or ethnicity, and often in other ways as well. But of the 6 white women, 3 are lesbians, 2 are Jewish; 3 are of working class backgrounds. The only white, heterosexual, of upper-middle class background participant had been married to a Muslim Arab man for 15 years, and had spent time living in the Mid-East, so also had personal experiences of marginalization. Perhaps one could assume because of these women's personal experiences of marginalization, they may have a greater interest in "teaching across borders" of race, gender, culture. Third, these women also range in age between 37 and 69, with most in their late 40s and early 50s who were strongly influenced by the Civil Rights Movements and other social movements of the '60s and '70s. Thus there may be strong cohort effects in light of this sample.

### Major Themes of Spiritual Experience

This study was not a developmental study per se; yet there are aspects that may suggest a developmental pattern over time among these women that focuses on the inter-connection of spirituality, social justice, and working across borders of race, gender, and culture. There were five overlapping themes of spiritual experience (discussed below) that emerged in the interviews.

#### The Spiral Process of Moving Beyond and "Re-Membering" Spiritual Attitudes and Symbols of Culture of Origin.

As mentioned above, none of these women currently participate regularly in religious practices of their childhood religious tradition. But each described a process of *moving away*, and then later going back and *"re-membering" the life enhancing elements* of their religious tradition of their upbringing. The initial *moving away* process began in their early adulthood, largely a result of what they perceived as their institutionalized religion's hypocrisy, sexism, heterosexism, lack of cultural support, or general irrelevance. For example, Julia, a Chicana, noted *"I went away to college [in the early '70s], and I stopped going to church . It was those rebellious times, the church, an institution, ... and the contradictions, the sexism, I started to question all of it."* Julia more or less "drifted away" during those times, where Shirley, an African American woman and civil rights activist, noted that at about the same age, her move away was even more intentional. *"I became convinced Christianity was a trick – the oppressor to keep us humble and in bondage... Even the terminology 'Lord', 'Master' – Father/ God—I had serious issue with it, and stopped going to church."*

In spite of this move away, most reported going back and "re-membering" and re-framing aspects of their childhood faith culture that was important and life giving. Some of these aspects related to the fact that their core values were very much informed by their faith of origin. For example, Maureen, a 55 year old white women who had been heavily involved in the social action movements sponsored by the Methodist Church in the '60s, noted *"it was from this crucible of spirituality and social action that my own sense of identity and core beliefs were formed."* Others, particularly the women of color, described an ancestral connection that was also present in their faith of origin. For example Aretha (a pseudonym), an African American woman, described the music of Aretha Franklin and its connection to the church of her ancestors as particularly significant, and as also related to her earlier church experiences. She states *"The way that Aretha sings is very old, so when I go back to my childhood, it's relay connected to my parents childhood, and so on, so she takes me back to places I don't even know that I know about. There are ancient roots that are beyond my memory of this time and place"*

Julia also discussed this ancestral connection and in critically reflecting on her Catholic roots, she discusses her current connection to her grandmother and La Virgen de Guadalupe. *I think part of my journey is going back to my heritage, my Aztec and indigenous roots...Ana Castillo gives a different picture of what La Virgen could represent in terms of powerful women... But there's* *another side to it... I don't always just go with 'this is the way that it is' because I do question 'was that a way for the Spaniards to ... convert the Aztecs into Catholicism? Or is it really an Aztec goddess?...But I do believe it's a spirit – a spirit that kind of watches over me."*

In addition to the ancestral connection and re-examining their core values, the participants also "re-membered" their culture of origin by looking for specific feminine examples of spiritual power and wisdom both from within and beyond their culture of origin. We see evidence of this in the importance of *La Virgin de Guadalupe* to Julia, and to Aretha Franklin for Aretha. Harriet, a white lesbian activist, takes inspiration in the work of Harriet Tubman. And Penny, a social activist notes: *It took nearly thirty years of my life for me to embrace my Jewishness in a deep emotional way, and so to claim my Jewishness as a significant part of my heritage and identity. My reading...along with my mentoring friendships with Jewish women activists--filled me with stories I related to, helping me access my own cultural background through women I identified with.* In sum, while these women needed to move beyond their childhood religious tradition to develop a meaningful adult spirituality, they often spiraled back to reconnect with and re-define important aspects of that culture that affirmed their gender and cultural identity.

### Interconnectedness/Wholeness

All of the participants virtually struggled to give "spirituality" concrete definition, and basically discussed spirituality as related to a sense of wholeness, interconnectedness, and as related to a higher power. As Aretha said: *I think of [spirituality] in terms of connections, and I think of it in terms of connections to all things, not just things here, but also things in the past, and things in the future... Spirituality to me is not something that you can hold down... It's something that's intuitive, and ...not necessarily "thought."* While some participants discussed this more conceptually, most gave concrete examples of how they experienced spirituality as providing a sense of wholeness. For example, Julia noted: *"We have this ritual in my family—every time I go home, and when I 'm getting ready to leave, I ask for my parents blessing, and so they'll take me into their room, and each one of them will bless me...And I don't feel complete if I don't do that .... So my father will bless me, 'te encomiendo a Dios Padre,...y a la Virgen de Guadalupe'.. and ask my grandmother and La Virgen to watch over me, and so I feel like my Grandmother's watching over me!* This sense of completeness or wholeness was experienced mostly in relationship to the interconnectedness of all things, sometimes in a sense of synchronicity, and in an uncanny connection to other people. For example, Heidi reported synchronous events such as when someone from long ago had been on her mind, and that person would suddenly call. Others reported the significance of meeting specific people at various points as an example of synchronicity, and the interconnectedness of all things. Others discussed a sense of spiritual connectedness both in personal significant love relationships, and more broadly to others.

### Experiences Of A Perceived "Higher Power" That Facilitates Healing And The Courage To Take Action

All of the participants discussed at length significant experiences related to a perceived higher power that specifically facilitated healing and the courage to take action. Most of these experiences were also extremely emotional. Harriet, who grew up Pentecostal in a working class community in the rural south, described an extremely significant spiritual experience that helped her come to terms with being a lesbian. *"I got hurt playing softball and I tore my quadriceps so bad I passed out. I went to the best orthopedist in town, who put a splint on it which hurt really bad. I also believed in faith healing, and one night I went to the altar I felt this real coldness go into my leg, and then [it] got really hot, and I thought "wow" and the minister told me -- I took the splint off, and the big lump that was on my leg, it was gone!... Well that was a turning point for me, because I thought 'why would God heal me, if I was this person that was condemned to hell. God wouldn't do that for me, and I thought 'OK, this is my sign, that it's OK for me to be a lesbian."* From that day forward she worked on behalf of women's rights, lesbian and gay rights, and on social issues of all kinds. Some of the participants reported experiences that were related to grief and new life. For example, Aretha described an experience immediately after her mother died, when she was traveling on a train to her mother's funeral. She notes *"I was watching the telephone poles go by, and a black bird flew past the window and came real close, and in my ear, I heard my mother's voice say 'I'm free!' , and it was like a major relief because I'd been grieving and crying and as soon as I heard that voice say "I'm free", it was OK."* Elise described a similar experience of the grief associated with having a miscarriage, and a troubled relationship with her own mother. She described going to a meditation service led by a woman in the Siddha Yoga tradition, shortly after her miscarriage, and explains *"Well I closed my eyes and everything was silent ... And all of a sudden there's a voice in my head, that is not my voice that says " why are you upset with your mother. I am the mother. Why blame her? ...After the program was over, ...I went up and when I did this woman said to me "you've been working very hard" and immediately I broke out into tears..., and I was just weeping, and at that moment my life changed."* In short, such significant moments in participants' lives facilitated healing and the courage to take action.

### The Facilitation of the Development of Authentic Identity

Most of the participants discussed spiritual experiences like those noted above as helping to facilitate the development of authentic identity. For example, Harriet's experience of her physical healing, also assured her of the authenticity of her own lesbian identity, and Elise's spiritual experience, helped her deal more proactively and more maturely with her own relationship with her mother. Some of the participants described experiences of moving away from their childhood religious traditions to develop other parts of themselves and a more adult spirituality as both a spiritual experience and the development of their identity. For example, Patricia, a white woman and psychology professor, described recognizing a need to develop her cognitive aspects of her identity and forego some of her involvements in a quasi-fundamentalist Christian community, in order to develop both intellectually and spiritually. Sue, an Asian American woman described living for a time overseas away from her husband and finding a more solid independent identity apart from her husband as a spiritual experience that facilitated her authentic identity. Aretha also described her move away from her religion of origin, and involvement in neo-Marxist social movements as facilitating a greater understanding of spirituality and her own identity. She notes *"I think Marxism is a form of spirituality because it really is about connections with other people; it's a rather earthly bound nature of connections, but it's still about looking back and looking forward, and taking care of each other. In terms of thinking* *about spirituality, that's a major piece of it, that those connections are there for taking care of each other. So I guess it became in my Marxist period; it was a transformation of God being outside of me who controlled all things [to] an inside internal controlling force."* Thus for all the participants to some degree, the move away from their childhood religion facilitated their spiritual development, and was viewed as related to a more authentic identity.

### A Moral Responsibility to Work for Social Change

Perhaps somewhat a function of the criteria for sample selection, yet extremely significant was the participants' commitment to work for social change in light of their spiritual commitments. This transcends concern specifically for one's particular identity group. As Julia notes, "*It's bigger than just being Chicana. I'm also a member of a global community – it encompasses more… [F]or me, working for social justice isn't just done 5 days a week; it's in every part of my life… it's a way of living. I call it spirituality*." Similarly, Mariposa, a Chinese American educator and activist who does a lot of cross cultural work notes that spirituality for her is about "*building community. I try to do that wherever I am; I really try to think through how we should live, and I try to spend time in reflection, and a lot about loving people, and forgiveness, about redemption… I know [it's] what helps me stay grounded. I'm kind of here on a mission, and that's what I got to do, and there's a lot of good people across all these cultural groups that are there."* For virtually all the participants, doing social justice work was part of a sense of mission. As Shirley explains, *"I think my responsibility is great because I know what people went through so that I could have the freedom and the power to move forward in the world, so I must get up! And I must dig deep! And I must do good! And to not do that would be an affront to my ancestors who stayed alive, and stayed strong, and stayed spiritually connected through centuries of brutality and everything, beyond slavery. That's what it is for me."* And that's what it is for almost all participants in this study!

### Spirituality in the Practice of Teaching for Social Change

All of the women in the study reported that spirituality indeed informed their educational practices, particularly in what they saw as the interconnection of spirituality and culture. As Penny reflected on this she said, *It's more like, are they separate? They're not separate. Because, what's culture? It's music, it's singing; it's dancing; it's storytelling; it's presentational knowing; it's spirituality. They're both less about what's happening in my head; they're more about what's happening in my body and my heart; and culture is a way to express spirituality; they're very interwoven."* In light of this interconnection, many reported that in discussions about crossing borders or race, class, culture, participants will often bring representations from their cultural background that are also spiritual symbols. Further, participants in the study as educators reported that they sometimes brought music or symbols out of their own tradition that are both cultural and spiritual. There was, however, a difference in how directly participants discussed these things in their educational contexts, particularly between how those who were working in higher education (8 participants) teaching classes focusing on diversity and those who did adult education work in community based organizations (5 participants). The higher educators tended to draw on it more in preparation for classes (through meditation), in advising sessions where it may be directly discussed, and in classroom activities where it might be more implicit, such as in the use of music, symbols, artforms, and occasional activities that might suggest a spiritual connection that moves beyond conflict. Those who worked in community based organizations on the other hand, reported that it comes up more directly. For example, Mariposa reported that in her social justice work with a Latino community, the participants co-created an educational activity done in the context of a Mass; in her work with a Native American community, a ritual ceremony was created by participants as empowerment of the group. While those who teach in higher education, expressed a desire to incorporate spirituality more directly, many were hesitant about doing so directly, for fear of seeming to impose a spiritual agenda.

## Summary and Conclusions

In sum, there seem to be some tentative conclusions in relationship to this study. First, knowledge of their childhood religious tradition was formative in giving participants something to "push against" in reappropriating a more "woman positive" and redefinition for their adult spirituality and a sense of the sacred. Second, participants' spiritual convictions, and/or community, and meditation practices provided a grounding place for nurturance in concrete ways, and for renewed courage to continue as educators for social justice. Third, their spirituality is grounded in their culture, and each of the participants found themselves reflecting back and reappropriating the healthy aspects of their early spiritual socialization that kept them connected to their ancestors and/or cultural roots, and discarding what was not life enhancing. Finally, all participants reported that their spirituality informs their educational practice in implicit ways, as a way of living and inter-relating, though are hesitant to discuss it directly in the educational activities they lead. Yet most participants reported trying to provide experiential activities that they defined as grounded in a spirituality to unify groups, in solidifying bonds, and in moving beyond conflict. In conclusion, while this study is limited, it offers some insight to how spirituality informs the work of women adult educators teaching for social change and makes a beginning contribution to the emancipatory adult education literature.

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# A Multisite Case Study Examining Mentoring Practices: Design and Implications for Practice

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This study assessed the perceptions of human resource managers, formally mentored employees, informally mentored employees, and non-mentored employees to determine the extent, use, and effectiveness of mentoring practices in selected business environments. In addition, the study determined how mentoring practices were defined and implemented. The purpose of the study was to contribute to the knowledge base of mentoring and provide a better understanding of current mentoring practices and their effects on productivity, satisfaction, commitment, and leadership.

## Introduction

The business world faces a myriad of challenges in the operation and conduct of its organizations as the 21st century approaches. Challenges frequently cited in business periodicals, newspapers, and seminars include: labor shortages, work-force diversity, mergers and acquisitions, new product development, and the increasing number and competitiveness of multinational organizations. A variety of approaches such as cross-cultural training, sensitivity training, diversity awareness training, communication training, and change adaptability training are being used to meet these challenges. Mentoring is also a particularly useful training and development tool that can be applied to solving the aforementioned problems.

According to Penny and Kummerow (1981) the word "mentor" came to mean "trusted friend and counselor" and was adopted in business to mean "career guide and executive nurturer." Levinson et al. (1978) had earlier defined mentoring as a process consisting of teaching, demonstration, interaction, feedback, and counseling. Thus, the definition of a mentor or the act of mentoring has evolved in the business world from formal apprenticeship training to a more flexible and useful definition.

Formal apprenticeship training was an integral part of training in the early stages of business enterprise in the United States. During the 1940s, apprenticeships were replaced by the earned college degree (Zey, 1988a). Companies assumed employees with college degrees had acquired the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to succeed in the business environment. The 1970s found many companies realizing the value of formalized mentoring programs again. By the early 1980s, many businesses were using formal mentoring programs primarily as a socialization and training tool. However, by the late 1980s companies experiencing financial difficulties began eliminating formal mentoring programs to save on costs (Zey, 1988a).

In spite of the decreased financial support of formal mentoring programs, Zey (1988b) argued that well-managed organizations continue to have strong orientation and mentoring programs. Such companies have mechanisms to encourage employees to adopt and keep shared values, beliefs, and practices that represent crucial elements of an organization's culture. A variety of human resources research since 1978 has supported the idea of establishing mentoring programs to help promote the development of potentially productive employees. For example, Burke and McKeen (1989) stated that mentoring programs offer many benefits to an organization and its employees. They highlighted the following benefits: improved job performance, lower employee turnover, more satisfying work experience, and more effective leadership training. Zey concurred and pointed out that both the employee and the sponsoring organization benefit from mentoring by: promoting the development of corporate managers, integrating the employee into the organization, promoting creativity and loyalty, and keeping communication lines open (Zey, 1988a).

Dreher and Ash (1990) conducted research concerning the advantages of mentoring from the perspective of employees. They found that employees who had experienced mentoring relationships reported receiving more promotions, had higher incomes, and were more satisfied with their pay and benefits than individuals who experienced less extensive mentoring relationships. Fagenson's (1989) research provided similar findings. She found that individuals who had mentors had more organizational policy influence, better access to important persons, and greater organizational resource levels.

Although mentoring was cited by many as a useful tool for employee development and training, several studies questioned the effectiveness of mentoring programs. Missirian (1982) cited some unsuccessful components of mentoring programs in her study. She found that one danger of mentoring occurred when the protégé became overly identified with the mentor in other employees' eyes. When the mentor left the organization, people didn't necessarily see the protégé as a separate individual but as an extension of his or her mentor. Also, when the mentor was at a higher organizational level than the protégé's boss, conflicts sometimes developed between the protégé, his or her boss, and the mentor. The outcomes from these types of situations can be potentially damaging to a protégé's career.

Other findings indicated that firms promoting mentoring programs, especially formalized programs, sometimes hindered employee development. Kizilos (1990) cited problems that developed when management failed to support individuals brought together by formal programs with the resources and encouragement that was expected by the mentors and protégés. These problems included resentment, anger, and discontentment. In addition, Kizilos's (1990) research of formalized programs indicated that mentoring programs did not always provide people with the career advancement connections they desired or expected.

Research conducted by Jacoby (1989) suggested that structured mentoring programs were an excellent vehicle for leadership development, training and sharing of expertise, and rapid development of talent. However, he also identified problems encountered when implementing programs. For example, Jacoby indicated that mentoring may not be appropriate for all managers. Some managers objected to mentoring because they perceived that the programs were outside of their usual work responsibilities.

In addition, some managers did not believe that they possessed the proper interpersonal skills to be an effective mentor.

## Significance of the Study

Mentoring was found to be a popular topic for research as evidenced by the literature; however, three research deficiencies were identified. First, several dissertations focused on mentoring in educational settings; yet, only one dissertation was found that studied mentoring in business, and this study was limited to one organization. Second, information about implementation procedures for mentoring practices and about the effectiveness of mentoring practices regarding productivity, satisfaction, commitment, and leadership was lacking in the literature. Last, specific individual and organizational difference variables including race, gender, restructuring, and top-management support were identified as needing further study.

## Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine the extent, use, and effectiveness of mentoring practices in selected business environments. In addition, the study was to determine how mentoring practices were defined and implemented.

## Statement of the Purpose

This research study contributes to the knowledge base of mentoring and provides a better understanding of mentoring practices and their effects as practiced currently in business organizations. The findings of this research study should be beneficial to human resource professionals, business educators, and business employees by providing them with a better understanding of the impact of formal mentoring, informal mentoring, and non-mentoring on productivity, satisfaction, commitment, and leadership.

Specifically, human resource professionals could benefit by using the information to effectively implement, monitor, and evaluate appropriate mentoring programs in their organizations. Business educators could benefit by using the information to assist in their teaching and training about mentoring practices and processes. Finally, business employees could benefit by using the information to aid in their career development and advancement efforts and in their decision to participate in mentoring practices at their organizations.

## Research Questions

1. What are the characteristics and processes of formal and informal mentoring practices in business organizations?

2. What are companies' mentoring philosophies, mentoring success rates, and mentoring research voids?

3. What are the effects of restructuring on mentoring practices?

4. What are the effects of race and gender on mentoring relationships?

5. What are the effects of mentoring on employee productivity, job satisfaction, commitment, and leadership?

6. What is the degree of top-management support relative to mentoring processes and practices?

## Research Design and Methodology

A qualitative research case study methodology seemed most appropriate and useful in conducting this study due to the perceptual nature of the research questions, which were determined by the literature review and the preliminary study. The choice of methodology followed Thomas's (1949) early, but well-respected, proposition that it is essential in the study of people to know just how people define the situation in which they find themselves: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas, 1949). This qualitative study relied on direct contact and participant interaction in understanding the participants' insights and experiences of the mentoring practices at multiple organizations. An inductive approach was utilized to understand the situation without imposing preexisting expectations on the phenomenon or setting.

The five organizations involved in this study were the largest organizations in the Chicagoland area based on number of employees. A total of 20 confidential interviews was conducted guided by a 27 question mentoring research instrument developed based on the literature review and preliminary interviews. Four interviews were held at each of the five selected profit organizations. Specifically, a human resource professional, an employee who had been formally mentored, an employee who had been informally mentored, and a non-mentored employee were interviewed at each organization. Internal validity was achieved by collecting
data that the researcher initially intended to collect. External validity was enhanced by triangulating multiple sources of data from four participants at each of five organizations. Validity was achieved by providing in-depth descriptions of the complexities of variables and interactions at the five settings. Objectivity was obtained by structuring each interview in the same format and following the 27-question sequence of the research instrument for each interview. To avoid biasing the results, the researcher did not share any personal mentoring ideas with the participants.

## Results

The findings provided several important highlights concerning the topic of mentoring. First of all, the definition of mentoring as perceived by human resource managers, formally mentored employees, informally mentored employees, and non-mentored employees were somewhat similar and included terms such as: developmental, relationship, senior employee, protégé, and career assistance. Second, the majority of the respondents had been mentored either formally or informally and also had served as mentors, either formally or informally. Third, the mentoring relationships lasted between 3 months and 20 years, and the amount of contact occurring between the protégés and the mentors varied from daily to as needed. Fourth, the outcomes for the protégés, as compared to non-mentored peers, were found to be improved productivity, satisfaction, commitment, and leadership. Fifth, formal mentoring programs had varied selection procedures typically administered by the Human Resource Department ranging from the unstructured choosing of mentors by protégés to the forced matching of mentors with protégés based on background information.

Sixth, target groups for mentoring programs included minorities, females, MBAs, new employees, and high-potential employees. Seventh, formal procedures and documentation regarding mentoring processes only existed in two of the five participating organizations. Eighth, communication within the organizations about mentoring processes was considered to be virtually non-existent. Ninth, informal and peer mentoring were stated as contributing to the career successes of many of the respondents. Tenth, employees who had been formally or informally mentored were likely to have served as mentors for others.

Overall, an indication exists that the majority of the participants valued mentoring processes and the resultant positive outcomes. The employees indicated a desire for organizations to establish formal mentoring programs, encourage formal and informal mentoring practices, and emphasize the importance of mentoring processes as a developmental technique leading to improved performance, satisfaction, commitment, and leadership.

## Conclusions

The characteristics and processes of formal and informal mentoring practices in business organizations indicated that most employees had a sound understanding of what was meant by the term "mentoring." Interestingly, an important theme perceived throughout the findings was that non-mentored employees believed the mentoring processes occurring at their organizations were politically driven, lacked information, and were not communicated to all employees, resulting in the conclusion that non-mentored employees were unhappy with the implementation procedures of mentoring practices in their organizations. Mentors were sought out for personal and professional advice and were chosen based on the mentor's experiences and trustworthiness leading to the conclusion that mentors were approachable and were willing to commit time for the development of the protégés.

Peer mentoring was being successfully done in business organizations informally, generating the conclusion that not all mentoring experiences needed upper level employees, financial support, or formal structures to be successful. Based on the findings, the conclusion can be made that the Human Resource Department typically had the primary responsibility for managing formal mentoring practices. The selection procedures for mentoring processes ranged from unstructured to forced matching based on the skills, backgrounds, and interests of the mentors and protégés. The majority of the respondents believed that there was no documentation available supporting their mentoring programs. However, since two of he organizations did have formal documentation available, the conclusion was derived that the mentoring programs were not adequately communicated to all employees in the organizations. Formal procedures or guidelines existed only in a small percentage of the organizations, leading to the conclusion that not much emphasis was being put on formal mentoring processes. Mentoring relationships ranged from 3 months to 20 years in duration, highlighting the versatility of the mentoring function. The number of times contact was made between mentors and protégés ranged from daily to monthly, concluding that there was not an optimal number of meeting times for mentoring relationships.

Some seasoned employees wanted to serve as mentors; however, some seasoned employees did not want to serve as mentors. The majority of the respondents believed that new employees wanted to serve as protégés, however, a few indicated that they did not want to serve as protégés. The resultant conclusion was that not all senior employees were eager to serve as mentors nor did all new employees desire to learn as protégés.

## Implications

Several implications can be asserted for human resource managers. Human resource managers should encourage formal and informal mentoring practices for all employees. Business employees are well aware of the concept of mentoring, and by promoting mentoring, the non-mentored employees may not believe mentoring is such a political process. Business employees should take advantage of formal and informal mentoring practices in their organizations to improve productivity, satisfaction, commitment, and leadership.

Human resource managers should encourage all business employees serving as mentors to be approachable and willing to commit time for the development of protégés. However, human resource managers should not require all senior employees or all new business employees to be involved in mentoring relationships because the results could be detrimental to organizations if employees do not want to participate. Also, mentoring programs should not be structured to fit specific time frames or require a set number of meetings per month. The length of the mentorships and the amount of contact necessary should evolve as the relationships become established.

Human resource managers should target women's groups and minority groups for formal mentoring processes to assist in elevating more females and minorities into higher levels of management by improving their developmental and promotional opportunities. Additionally, company images could be improved by the portrayal of efforts to help less advantaged employees. Human resource managers should encourage top managers to be supportive of and involved with formal and informal mentoring processes in their organizations. The end results from such support could be increased productivity, satisfaction, commitment, and leadership for employees possibly leading to overall better outcomes for organizations.

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# Understanding Overloaded Adults' Readiness Level for Learning: McClusky's Theory of Margin Refuted

Rosemary Wolflin

## Abstract

*For the past 30 years, the field of adult education has relied upon Howard Y. McClusky's theory of margin for describing, predicting, or explaining adults' readiness for learning. McClusky has made an important contribution to the field by getting the field to look closely at adults' load and power. The problem, however, has been a lack of data-based studies to support McClusky's theory of margin. In a recent dissertation, Understanding Overloaded Adults' Readiness Level for Learning (Wolflin, 1999), the researcher found a way to test McClusky's theory and to determine what matters and what does not matter in understanding overloaded adults' readiness level for learning. Among the numerous findings, the researcher found combined quantitative and qualitative evidence that refutes McClusky's theory of margin. The researcher also found that the majority of adults (77%) walking on downtown sidewalks in four various Indiana cities on Saturdays were "overloaded adults." This paper presents: 1) the implications of Wolflin's dissertation findings for professional practice that are unique to the dissertation or not well known to the field, 2) the dissertation design, 3) important conclusions supported by the data, and 4) Wolflin's Model for Understanding Overloaded Adults' Readiness Level for Learning.*

## Introduction

Since the early 1970s, adult educators have had to treat Howard Y. McClusky's theory of margin as simply an interesting, logical concept because of a lack of data-based studies relating to adults' readiness level for learning. According to Hiemstra (1993), McClusky's theory has not been fully developed, that his theory has:

> ...retained some popularity and utility as measured in terms of citations in the literature or use as a basis for research....McClusky was an enormously popular and admired teacher, leader, and author. He was highly respected and held in high esteem, and many people simply believed what he said about adults and learning. However, his theory does not specifically address the actual function and features of learning, so empirical testing has been difficult. (p. 43)

According to Howard Y. McClusky's (1973) theory of margin, in order for an individual to be autonomous and more likely to learn, that individual's *power* (available resources such as family support, social and/or economic abilities, possessions, position, allies, resilience, coping skills, and personality) must exceed that individual's *load* (social and self demands such as the stress of family, work, and/or social responsibilities and the pressure of aspirations, desires, and expectations). "Whatever the load and whatever the power (up to a practical level), the *crucial* [italics added] element is the surplus or margin of power in excess of load" (McClusky, 1973, p. 330). In 1970, McClusky stated that "a *necessary* [italics added] condition for learning is access to and/or the activation of a Margin of Power that may be available for application to the processes which the learning situation requires" (McClusky, 1970, pp. 82-83).

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Nonetheless, in a recent dissertation, *Understanding Overloaded Adults' Readiness Level for Learning* (Wolflin, 1999), the researcher found a way to test the so-called "untestable" theory of margin. This dissertation provides the field of adult education with a data-based study that refutes McClusky's theory of margin and establishes a foundation for what matters in understanding overloaded adults' readiness level for learning.

### Connecting Research to Practice – Implications of Wolflin's Findings for Professional Practice

Although implications for practice are typically discussed near the end of a manuscript, this paper presents the implications of Wolflin's dissertation findings for practice at the beginning, before the description of the dissertation design, in an attempt to demonstrate the importance of connecting research to practice. With respect to connecting "readiness to learn" research to practice, Cropley (1985) states that a:

> ...fundamental analysis based on the concept of motivation as the state of readiness to learn (regardless of what it is that people hope to learn) also has major implications for the practice of adult education. Such an analysis leads to guidelines for content, teaching and learning processes and activities, organization…as well as drawing to dangers and problems which need to be kept in mind. (p. 26)

The findings in Wolflin's dissertation suggest numerous well-known and unique implications for professional practice. This paper presents only those implications that are unique to Wolflin's dissertation or are not well known to the field.

First, the findings in the dissertation indicate, alarmingly, that a *majority* of adults (77%) walking downtown on Saturdays are adults with excessive demands, burdens, or responsibilities ("Overloaded Adults"). Some of the adults walking downtown on a Saturday in the study were students in formal education, employed full time, single, or raising children, while others were not – appearing representative of the general population. Practitioners need to concentrate *much more* on developing and marketing programs that are specific to the needs and wants of Overloaded Adults. Second, the findings in the dissertation suggest that the *ratio* between load and power, specifically the margin of power, is not what matters in determining Overloaded Adults' readiness level for learning. The researcher found in the study that there was likely no relationship between load and readiness level for learning and that the Overloaded Adults with a surplus of power over load were not necessarily more likely to learn than the Overloaded Adults with a surplus of load over power, indicating that a surplus of power over load is not a "necessary condition" or "crucial element" for adults to be more likely to learn. The findings in the dissertation suggest that Overloaded Adults will do all they can, regardless of their inhibiting conditions or situations and regardless of their deficiencies in power, to participate in educational activities if those Overloaded Adults perceive the subject matter as essential, meaningful, or worthwhile and perceive the learning method as convenient. The researcher also found that while several Overloaded Adults with inhibiting conditions or situations did not perceive they were able to participate in particular educational activities, other Overloaded Adults *also with* *those inhibiting conditions or situations* did perceive they were able to participate in particular educational activities and were currently doing so. Detailed important conclusions, supported by the dissertation data, that practitioners should consider when developing and marketing educational activities for Overloaded Adults are described later in this paper.

## Wolflin's Dissertation Design

The purpose of Wolflin's dissertation was to investigate adults with excessive demands or responsibilities and their readiness level for learning. The study was intended to answer the following *research questions*:

1. What is the correlation, if any, either negative or positive, between Overloaded Adults' Load, as measured by Harriet B. Braiker's Type E Stress Inventory, and their Readiness Level for learning, as measured by the researcher's questionnaire?
2. What negative factors relate to the surveyed Overloaded Adults participating in Formal, Nonformal, or Informal educational activities?
3. What percentages of the surveyed Overloaded Adults are 1) both able and willing to participate, 2) only willing to participate, 3) only able to participate, and 4) neither able nor willing to participate in Formal, Nonformal, and Informal educational activities?
4. What actions do the surveyed Overloaded Adults use to cope with or overcome their Load? What sources of Power, as identified in the researcher's questionnaire, do the surveyed Overloaded Adults identify as present or not present?
5. How do the surveyed Overloaded Adults' demographic characteristics, as identified in the researcher's questionnaire and by the researcher observations of the Overloaded Adults, relate to their Load and Readiness Level for learning?

Note: Upon collecting data, important supplemental information emerged that was included in the study.

The participants in the study consisted of 78 adults, women and men, in the general population who could be found by the researcher, with a clipboard in hand, walking on downtown sidewalks on a Saturday in Huntington, Indianapolis, Lafayette, or Wabash, Indiana; appeared willing to stop and fill out a survey; and did stop and fill out the researcher's survey, which consisted of two parts: the Type E Stress Inventory developed by Braiker (1986) and a questionnaire developed and field tested by the researcher. Of those 78 participants, the first 15 participants in each of the four data collection sites scoring high enough on the Type E Stress Inventory to be classified as suffering from Type E stress (the stress of being everything to everybody and qualifying as "overloaded"), totaling 60 Overloaded Adults, constituted the convenience sample investigated in the study. In addition, the 21 Overloaded Adults who indicated on the questionnaire the willingness to be interviewed were then telephoned and interviewed, using a tape recorder. The method was appropriate, as it 1) produced both quantitative and qualitative evidence of behavior in a comprehensive, systematic manner and 2) enabled the researcher to be in the heart of the study and feel and hear the voices of the adults under investigation in their natural setting. The researcher analyzed the data using the Pearson correlation coefficient statistic and a scatter plot, tallies and percentages, observations, and interview responses incorporated into a profile and description of general themes.

### Important Conclusions from the Dissertation Data

1. The majority of adults walking downtown on Saturdays are or need to be autonomous learners. Most of the individuals who completed the Braiker Stress Inventory qualified as Overloaded Adults and were much more likely to participate in informal educational activities than in formal or nonformal educational activities.
2. Books and magazines are very important to Overloaded Adults. Almost every successfully interviewed Overloaded Adult indicated that she or he would read a book or magazine whenever possible, usually in the evenings "just before going to bed."
3. Type E stress is not just a woman's stress. Just as many men as women scored high enough on the Braiker Stress Inventory to qualify as Type E. This conclusion contradicts Braiker's (1986) assertion that Type E stress is a woman's stress.
4. Stress does not necessarily decrease Overloaded Adults' readiness level for learning. Approximately one third of the Overloaded Adults believed that their stress helped or did not affect their readiness for learning.
5. Overloaded Adults who are women are less likely ready to learn than Overloaded Adults who are men. Women scored the highest load and lowest readiness level for learning, while more men than women scored the lowest load and highest readiness level for learning. Single mothers, in particular, were at high risk for not being ready to learn.
6. Overloaded Adults' readiness level for learning is not based on the Overloaded Adults' ratio of load to power. There was likely no correlation between load and readiness level for learning, and a surplus of power over load was not a "necessary condition" or "crucial element" for being more likely to learn. Several Overloaded Adults were participating in educational activities regardless of their high load or deficiencies in power. This conclusion contradicts McClusky's (1973) margin of power theory.
7. Overloaded Adults' perceptions of readiness for learning are shaped by their load and by their power. Several Overloaded Adults perceived they could not participate in particular educational activities because of their high load or deficiencies in power.
8. Overloaded Adults' readiness level for learning is based on Overloaded Adults' perceptions about the value and convenience of learning. Overloaded Adults were more likely to learn if those Overloaded Adults perceived the subject matter as essential, meaningful, or worthwhile and perceived the learning method as convenient.
9. Many Overloaded Adults do not participate in educational activities, in part, because they are not aware of the various educational activities or opportunities available to them. Most of the successfully interviewed Overloaded Adults indicated that they were not aware of the various educational opportunities. Nearly half of all 60 Overloaded Adults indicated that they were not able to find out what is going on in the community.
10. Even if Overloaded Adults' efforts to learn are supported or encouraged by other individuals, those Overloaded Adults are nevertheless considerably impacted when an individual discourages their efforts to learn. At least 6 out of 21 successfully interviewed Overloaded Adults described how individuals had discouraged their efforts to learn.

11. Living with a partner or spouse is a source of power. Every successfully interviewed Overloaded Adult living with a partner or spouse indicated that their partner or spouse supported or encouraged their efforts to learn. Only 10% of all 60 Overloaded Adults indicated that they have a partner or spouse who does not want her or him to take a class.

12. Overloaded Adults are very willing to learn. Most of the Overloaded Adults indicated that they were willing to participate in formal, nonformal, and informal educational activities. All but two of the 21 successfully interviewed Overloaded Adults indicated that they were very willing to learn new knowledge or skills.

13. The terms *willingness* and *ability* consist of an infinite number of variables. Willingness and ability, as indicators of readiness for learning, cannot be defined simply as the desire to learn and the ability to find time, money, and transportation for learning, and these terms cannot be defined simply as having confidence, commitment, or motivation, and having knowledge, experience, or skill as defined by Hersey & Blanchard (1988). An infinite number of other factors, as defined by any given Overloaded Adult's snapshot in time with limited reflection, influence Overloaded Adults' willingness or ability to learn.

## Wolflin's Model for Understanding Overloaded Adults' Readiness Level for Learning

Based on the combined quantitative and qualitative dissertation data, Wolflin developed the following Model for Understanding Overloaded Adults' Readiness Level for Learning:

| | Subject Matter | | Learning Method | | Readiness Level for Learning |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OA→P→I→Perceptions → | \|→E/M/W | → | C | → | High |
| | \|→E/M/W | → | NC | → | |
| | \|→NE/NM/NW | → | C | → | |
| | \|→NE/NM/NW | → | NC | → | Low |

OA = Overloaded Adult; P = Power; I = Inhibitors
E = Essential; M = Meaningful; W = Worthwhile; C = Convenient; N = Not

| What Matters | What Does Not Matter |
|---|---|
| Whether or not the subject matter is perceived as essential, meaningful, or worthwhile and whether or not the learning method is perceived as convenient as shaped by one's power and inhibitors | The ratio between Load and Power; margin of Power over Load |

Inhibitors:

1) Cannot read or understand the meaning of basic words
2) Is a single mother
3) Is depressed
4) Lives with at least one child
5) Is worrying about something (i.e., making the grade, bills, health)
6) Has fluctuating self-esteem
7) Has scheduling difficulties
8) Has stressful job or family demands
9) Is emotionally unstable
10) Cannot find a babysitter or does not trust others to watch the kids
11) Cannot find transportation
12) Had recent death or trauma in the family
13) Is not aware of the educational opportunities
14) Is on a fixed income or lacks enough money to pay for the activity
15) Is over age 30
16) Is a single woman
17) Does not live with a partner or spouse
18) Has negative emotions
19) Is taking medication
20) Has mind on other things, not on learning more things
21) Lacks enthusiasm or confidence
22) Has conflicting multiple roles
23) Has attention deficit, stress, or panic disorder
24) Has pain from a physical disability; does not feel well
25) Does not want to take time away from partner or spouse as a couple
26) Is discouraged by someone
27) Has a reserved personality
28) Is both not a student *and* not employed
29) Is not interested in or would not enjoy the activity
30) Has a learning disability

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## In Closing

McClusky made a useful contribution to the field by getting the field to look closely at adults' load and power, but practitioners must now ignore his margin of power theory. Based on the findings in Wolflin's dissertation, *how much* load versus *how much* power an overloaded adult has does not determine whether or not that overloaded adult is likely to learn. One of many inhibiting conditions or situations, regardless of any excess amount of power, may be all it takes to make an overloaded adult believe she or he is unable to participate in particular educational activities; as well, other overloaded adults, regardless of any excess amount of load, believe they are able to participate and are doing so. Although load and power are important factors relating to readiness for learning, practitioners must understand that overloaded adults' readiness level for learning is not a matter of the load-power ratio. Overloaded adults' readiness level for learning is, instead, a matter of whether or not the subject matter is perceived as essential, meaningful, or worthwhile and whether or not the learning method is perceived as convenient as shaped by one's power and inhibitors.

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**TO:** Adult Education Colleagues

**FROM:** John A. Henschke, Ed. D.
Associate Professor
Education – Adult Education
University of Missouri – St. Louis

**SUBJECT:** Guide to reading Dr. Lawrence S. Berlin's Keynote Speech – 1999 Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference, St. Louis, Missouri

**NOTE:** To the original printed manuscript of Dr. Berlin's keynote speech has been added his words and commentary, and an occasional audience response that appeared on the audio tape recording during his delivering the keynote at the Conference. These words, commentary and responses appearing only on the tape and not the original manuscript will be identified in the text as follows: *[brackets will be at the beginning and end of each addition with the words and brackets in italics].*

*Understand that italicized words not enclosed in brackets within the text are in Dr. Berlin's original printed manuscript.*

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# KEYNOTE ADDRESS
## MIDWEST RESEARCH TO PRACTICE CONFERENCE

**September 23, 1999**
**Lawrence S. Berlin**
***The Accidental Tourist***

**Kia ora, kia ora.**
*Greetings, greetings.*

**Ko au ko koe, ko koe ko au.**
**Ko taua.**
*I am you and you are me.*
*We two, together.*

**Ko au ko au, ko koe ko koe.**
**Ko taua.**
*I am who I am and you are who you are.*
*We two, together.*

(from the Maori)

When Ann Austin asked me to be the keynote speaker for the 18th Annual Research to Practice Conference, I suddenly realized what the old saying "looking down the other end of the barrel" meant! I have had the responsibility of securing speakers for public events and this responsibility was a major source of *angst* for me -- I don't know whether it has been for Ann, but I can't believe that she hasn't suffered just a bit, as I so often did.

First there was the problem of deciding whom to ask, who was the right person for the occasion. Then came the task of tracking them down and persuading them to come and talk. Once the speaker said yes, you might think our problems would be over -- but oh no, they are just beginning. You worry about whether or not you've made the right choice, and then you come to believe you have offered far too much money -- an inflated honorarium that was proffered solely to make sure the object of desire could not say "no"! *[Happily, this is not an issue for us!]* Once past these concerns and as the day of the event nears, you really have something to worry about -- what if the speaker does not show up? Now there's a nifty challenge -- and it has happened to me!

But there is still another prospective problem lurking in the back of your mind. You have persuaded yourself that you have chosen the right speaker, the money is right, the speaker most assuredly will appear at the appointed time and place, but suddenly you are confronted by the most frightening possibility -- a thought which strikes terror in the hearts of all who have ever assumed the responsibility for planning an event such as ours here today. What if the speaker, whom you have cajoled, fawned over, accepted unreasonable terms from to assure an appearance -- what if our prize HAS NOTHING TO SAY?!! (which some of you may be worrying about NOW!) *[laughter by the audience!]*

And so I stand before you -- exposed, subject to your judgment as to whether or not I have anything to say as I attempt to negotiate a journey of reflection and observation.

The title of my talk is taken from Anne Tyler's near perfect, pellucidly written novel, *The Accidental Tourist.* I will briefly describe the story which may help those of you who have read the book recall its details and perhaps lead those who have not read it to do so, for it is a quite wonderful work of art. *[It is fabulously beautiful!]* And for those of you, who know the story *only* from the movie, my advice is READ THE BOOK!

*The Accidental Tourist* is the story of Macon Leary, a near middle aged, unhappy man whose marriage has faltered, whose only child died tragically, and whose world offers few consolations and fewer rewards. Not even his work satisfies him -- Leary is a writer, a very special kind of writer. He writes travel books -- but he dislikes travelling -- in fact, he hates it! *[Can you believe that?]* So he writes travel books for people like himself -- reluctant travelers, who are compelled to journey for business reasons, but who would much rather stay at home. Macon Leary caters to their special needs -- and while they and he may travel miles and miles, the reader of his travel books will never feel far from home. *[I have traveled far to this conference – New Zealand – and I feel quite at home here. I didn't need Macon Leary to help me out on this one! I could have used a little exercise on the twenty (20) hour airplane trip; but that's another matter.]*

It is the genius of Anne Tyler to offer us Macon Leary's journey of self-discovery as a moral fable -- she permits him to confront himself in profound and provocative ways which compel him to look back over his life, to travel old paths, while at the same time she allows him both to be led and then lead himself *[directly and totally]* down totally new streets. In the end, which comes with breathtaking dramatic force, Macon rejects the tried, the familiar, the comfortable, the solace of memory, and leaps forward, willingly grasping the uncertain future that has fortuitously presented itself to him. We leave him blinded by the possibility of love and hope and a different journey.

Macon Leary's story is, I believe, a metaphor for us, for me at least. We all travel far more than we fully realize -- one does not have to leave home in order to journey far -- imaginary trips are as powerful, perhaps more so, as those which are real and directly experienced.

Educational journeys are no different. As Macon Leary was loathe to do, sometimes we are reluctant to leave the comfort of our own ways of thinking. Some of the most provocative, the most influential and the most enduring journeys which have special meaning for us are pure invention; fictions of their creators whose imaginations leap to the possibilities represented in such travel. After all, haven't we all been taught that travel is broadening, travel is educative? Imaginary landscapes can be made to appear as real as their concrete lived counterparts -- and the soil of imagination can be tilled with a pen (some might say today a word processor – but *[as most of you know]* I still insist on a pen!) -- a pen that can be carried easily throughout the trip.

If we start near the beginning of educational history, we are confronted by a question which resonates still today, some 2500 years after Meno confronts Socrates. "Can virtue be taught" asks Plato's agent, and Socrates' attempt to find an answer set in motion a journey of intellectual *[educational]* discovery whose claims upon us are near inescapable. We may not wish always to acknowledge the force of ideas in our lives, especially as we go about our daily routines but *we are* shaped both by ideas and experience. Plato's idealism may be too harsh, too extreme, too unforgiving for most modern sensibilities, yet we seem unable to imagine an educational discourse that excludes his fundamental formulations and his dramatic method of storytelling as moral guide and moral standard.

While I would argue *[on the tape Dr. Berlin said "agree"]* that virtue cannot, at least in didactic terms, be taught, it does not mean that we should ignore the question -- in fact, we cannot escape it. The concept of virtue is but a code word, an intellectual signifier which when deciphered **(some might** say deconstructed!) is directed to the question of "how shall we lead our lives?" Or, put another way -- as influenced by classical thought -- "what does it mean to live a right life -- what does it mean to be a good person?"

These all too easily evaded questions go to the heart of what we as people who profess education must confront. Failure to confront the moral/ethical domains of educational thought and practice will ultimately disqualify us when we come to judge the efforts of others.

Like so many of my generation of adult educators I came to my vocation quite by accident. Certainly I had no intention, no ambition to profess or practice adult education -- nearly a half a century ago I didn't know such a thing existed. What I did know at the time was that I needed a job -- a wife and a couple of young kids were forceful reminders of that ever present and harsh economic reality! *[When you come to the end of undergraduate school, a lot of things become real, in fact, that you thought for a long period of time and, in fact, you had pushed aside. To stay all day in the library was just absolutely wonderful. When all of a sudden something else intrudes, and it called to me, and that's, in fact, what happened to me.]* Near the end of graduate school and with an expectation that political theory could wait a bit longer, I turned to a friend who owed me a favor. I had found him a job previously and it was time for him to return the favor. Literally overnight he acted and before I knew what was happening to me I was a staff member in the University's (of Michigan) Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations. *[I wasn't the director. {The audience sighs, "AAAHHHWWW!"} But I got promotions, even undeserved promotions. {laughter from the audience} It's an easy way to get to the top.]*

A mark of the profound differences between then and now is embedded in this little tale of job finding -- there was no affirmative action posting, no public disclosure, no standard of review, just the old boys network hard at work -- favor asked, favor bestowed. My adult education history began in one historical period and, in a very special way, ends here today in a dramatically different moment in *[historical]* time. *[I mean the feeling, the mood, the tone of forty (40) years of difference in terms of how we do business, how we think about ourselves in relationship to how we are situated with our best efforts within our context of the kinds of commitments we make are clearly indications of the kind of travel we felt.]*

But what was I doing in a place that was committed to labor education? I didn't have the slightest clue. I had never given the idea of adult education a minutes thought -- in fact I don't think I had ever heard the phrase spoken. *[I know that the two words – adult education – were beyond my knowledge and experience at that moment and there I was in an adult education setting.]* Notions such as continuing education, post-secondary education, lifelong learning, adult learning were all concepts outside my experience -- in effect a kind of foreign language that I was to come to master in the course of a career which took me to many places, to strange and exciting new lands.

At the Institute where my travels began I soon learned how much I had to learn. Being responsible for a group of Italian trade unionists brought to America as part of the U.S. government's "anti-Communist cold-war save the world for America style democracy" was this old adult educator's baptism by fire. *[I might say something as an aside about what I discovered a long time after I left the Institute that this was an Aid for International Development (AID) Department of Labor enterprise that was an integral part of the post World War II response to the Cold War, the anti-communist response; and the American Government was absolutely persuaded that the Russian communists were going to infiltrate the entire labor establishment in the West, all of the trade unions in Britain, France, Italy, Holland, certainly in Germany, and in Indonesia, Maylasia and all around the world. The response to that was to bring the leadership, especially the* *younger chronologic leadership that were not identified as Communist-led trade unions, bring that leadership to this country and essentially indoctrinate them in union democracy American style, and send them back as a bulwark against Communism. It was a wonderfully, fantastic idea which was bound to fail, and it did. But, it did provide much uncritical government spending, and wonderful opportunities for employment for people finishing graduate school. What I did come to learn was that our efforts were so untrustworthy that we were spied upon by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), to make sure that we were politically correct. This we found out twenty-five (25) years later. So, all of the government's own efforts were not trusted by our own government, and the reason for that was that during the fifties (50s) and sixties (60s) new hires by the Department of Labor were from the legacy of the New Deal in the mid-thirties (30s) forward, and they were to be watched closely and we then fought ourselves.]* I quickly, and at times painfully, came to realize that working with mature, self reliant, intrinsically motivated adults (many of whom were in the process of learning a new language, as I was also learning my new language) was different from trying to lead a discussion section of Political Science 101 that was filled with indifferent, bored 18 year olds who for the most part wanted to be somewhere else -- at least at 8:00am they appeared not yet ready to breakfast with Aristotle and St. Augustine! And while my lectures to this new breed of student-adults -- seemed to be going well, I was also charged with programmes and administrative duties -- something, once again, new for me. I had to make things happen in the real world (including finding a dentist at 3:00am in the morning). *[This happened to me one morning with one of the chaps, a very difficult situation, who had a medical emergency. I had to first of all persuade my personal dentist to come, help out in this situation, and take this guy into his office at 3am in the morning and the dentist was required to perform surgery on the spot. So we have this simultaneous translator, the dentist, patient and me. I have to scrub, to put a mask on, put rubber gloves on – there is no dental hygienist available – it is 3:30 am. The dentist is doing his work, whatever it was, and we hear this funny sound. What is it? The translator is passed out on the floor. We how have two (2) patients at 3:30 am. Somehow, we even survived that and went back to lecturing the morning following. So, learning wherever you are.]*

What did I know about program design and management of adult programs -- where could I get help? Of course help was all around, one just needed to look, to see that others were similarly situated and the resources of mutual experience could be a powerful force for learning. The lesson I learned from Emilio Catalano has never left me -- Emilio was one of the two simultaneous translators provided the Institute by A.I.D. to assure that the students could understand the lectures while struggling to learn English.

Emilio's story is a story of action and courage and risk. Born to a famous Italian Army family -- his father, grandfather, uncles, were all high ranked army officers -- generals, command officers -- and the family's expectations for him were the same. Except he thought otherwise and so acted -- he joined the Italian Navy and became a submarine commander!

And what did he do when World War II broke out? He sailed his sub across (under?) the Atlantic and surrendered at once in the port of Miami, Florida. No fighting for Emilio, instead internment in the U.S. with a translator's career awaiting him. I asked him about all this -- he had planned it all. He was a pacifist, an anti-fascist and he intended to take matters in his own hands. He saved the lives of his crew in addition to his own, and he positioned himself in opposition to the expectation of "this is the way things are always done and shall always be done". A powerful and dramatic story of human agency which marked for me the very first time an appreciation of the meaning of adultness -- of what it means to be fully in possession of self; a self which is pregnant with capacity and the capability of engaging in purposeful, meaningful action.

Emilio was a great teacher -- I without appreciating what was happening to me was taking to adult education as a duck to water -- a life long love affair was in the making, and like most love affairs the road ahead was not without peril, oftentimes bumpy and full of wrong turns and many flat tires, yet worth it always.

And it wasn't only the sink or swim experience which taught me. I also discovered early on that there was a literature of adult education waiting to ensnare an unsuspecting, unpracticed and naive newcomer to the field. A literature which did not at all feel like or taste like the literature of political science -- it had its own cadences, its own vocabulary, its own hidden codes and assumptions which for a newcomer were both elusive and mysterious. When I first read Cy Houle's *The Inquiring Mind* I was blown over -- so beguiling, so persuasive (I thought) -- how could it possibly be wrong? Little did I know or understand all those years ago that what Cy had to say was decontextualised, unproblematised, and unreflective. Yet my generation continued to read and be influenced by the mainline canon of American adult education -- and when Houle's *The Design of Education* appeared who among us did not, at least for a brief moment, believe that all we needed to know about programme planning and design was in front of us; revealed for all who wished to partake -- like a secret out of a box (a black box full of mystery). And like kids in a candy story we were drawn to this line of thought and argument without much concern for what might not be in the box -- in fact I even taught *The Design of Education* and relied heavily (too heavily, I confess) on much of Houle's work. *[As an aside, a confessional aside, Houle was a wonderful man and a wonderful friend of mine. So, in his memory, I'll offer these remarks. It wasn't his fault that I was fooled by what he was writing, it was my fault.]*

The seductive authority of Houle's graceful formulations and Malcolm Knowles' subsequent distortions of the teaching/learning equation which followed his confounding conflation of pedagogy and andragogy were to a considerable extent responsible for what many of us came to feel and believe was the increasing dominance of instrumental and utilitarian values in the field. I think there is no doubt that the andragogy/pedagogy conundrum cost us dearly for it detached us from a substantively richer tradition of thought and practice which nurtured and sustained the field during the first 50 years of this century. What marks the second half of the century and coincides with my personal professional history is, I believe, a struggle to find a way back to a morally and ethically defensible stance which can illuminate adult education's prospects for the century we are about to enter.

Knowles' legacy to us was to severely distort the scales of practice. So severely that means outweighed ends to such an extent that my generation soon lost sight of the challenge that is inherently and necessarily embedded in the best of what we stand for. Historically adult education has stood for possibilities -- human possibilities that can be played out, realized in educational forums which are democratically organized and socially responsible. This is the tradition in which I grew up and believed as I do still is the only defensible justification for our being.

But I am getting ahead of my story. Following a year at the Institute I was invited to join the staff of the University Extension Service (once again the old boy network as at work, the Associate Director was a Political Science Professor and a close friend). *[I'm going to come back to this "old person" network. There are some interesting implications here.]* Here I discovered still a different universe of adult education far distant from the one I had just experienced and was beginning to make sense of at the Institute. I was exposed for the first time to a hidden university -- a university within the larger university -- a large, dynamic, complex, multi layered enterprise which was larger and better endowed than many of the four year institutions of higher learning in America. Hidden away from the public face of the University was an educational agency that served over ten thousand students offering over 350 courses a year throughout the State of Michigan. And this represented only a portion of the total enterprise -- there was a vigorous conference department, a professional real estate programme, a fire training institute, *[As an aside, if you remember the history our – University of Michigan -- fire training institute, your – Michigan State University -- police academy, the great political debate that took place at the end of World War II when the two universities – Michigan & Michigan State – were fighting to carve up the educational pie in the State of Michigan; and all of these goodies were lying around for the taking, and among the goodies were the provision of continuing education and further education to the small town volunteer fire departments, and comparable programmes for training police officers. In the bidding wars, Michigan State got the police officers – having to do, I suspect, with the proximity of the State Police Academy, and we (University of Michigan) got the fire training and got burned by it all the way. (laughter of audience) I don't know if you*

*(Michigan State University) got shot! (laughter of audience)]* a home and family life programme, a correspondence study programme and a liberal arts non credit programme. All of this activity flourished day by day yet hardly anyone noticed (except the participants, of course), certainly not the faculty unless they taught in the programme and certainly not the enormous number of residential students who lived lives largely disconnected from the realities of the work a day world which most of us were experiencing. In a relatively short period of time I was to become one of the principal actors in this great agency. And the Extension Service was to become one of my great teachers -- revealing to me a history of the adult education movement and connecting me to some of the great names and personalities of this century. This was possible because the then director, and his immediate predecessors, *[Everett Suter?]* believed passionately in the values and virtues of adult education. They learned them directly from C. Hartley Grattan, Howard McClusky, the Overstreets, Mary Follett, and yes John Dewey and Eduard Lindeman. *[all of whom were personal friends of these men. So, I got connected with them vicariously.]* This was heady stuff for me, I lapped it up, stored it away as I tried to sort out the connections that existed between the National University Continuing Education Association, the International Council of Adult Education, the Association of University Evening Colleges, the Adult Education Association of the United States, the National Association of Public School Adult Educators (we know these last two today as The American Association for Adult and Continuing Education -- A.A.A.C.E.) and so on. *[Trying to work your way through the acronyms of these national organizations and agencies is always a confounding experience. When you go to the meetings you are no better served. When you are a newcomer, the shorthand is talked around you. It takes a long time to get there. It is a different language.]*

And if this was not enough, as if I needed more still to confuse my understandings of what adult education was about I discovered the Centre for the Study of the Liberal Education of Adults (C.S.L.E.A.) -- that marvelous think tank *[which I had a great deal of affinity for]* devoted to the cause of liberal education for adults housed at the University of Chicago. *[Later CSLEA went to Boston University, then Syracuse University & what is left of it is at the Syracuse*

*University Library of Continuing Education.]* Subvented by a generous, although too short lived, endowment from the Ford Foundation Fund for the Advancement of Adult Education the Centre came to represent much of the best and most sophisticated thinking in the field in the immediate post World War II era. And it was at the Centre that I met Milton Stern whose influence on me was immense and whose presence remains with me still.

Because the University Extension Service's own history was embedded in the history of the American adult education movement I came under the palpable claim of the liberal progressive tradition of adult education. It was this tradition which ultimately shaped both my understandings and beliefs about adult education and educational practice in general. I have been wedded to a tradition that for nearly half a century has been pushed aside, continuing to wait in the wings believing, not so foolishly in my estimation, for the circle to turn as we come to understand that too much of the support for current practice is predicated on both intellectually tenuous grounds and largely indefensible theoretical precepts.

Adult education has always been situated, located on the edges or margins of educational practice. We may wring our hands over this fact (and it is indeed a fact) but the truth is we should celebrate this reality for it liberates us from the tyranny of organizational bureaucratic protocol and allows the space to experiment, to innovate -- to speak our educational minds in ways that *should* threaten the established order.

But if we speak our minds, what should we speak of, what do we have to say; what do we stand for? Are there answers in our own history, in the history of practice -- if so where to look and to whom should we look? These are not easy questions for the dualism of prevailing intellectual modalities and their effects on education generally and on adult education in particular tend to obscure access to the kinds of insights that might be most helpful to us. The most obvious issue, the one which always comes first to my mind as I think about these matters is the theory/practice dilemma. Without surveying for you the inevitably tiresome literature that surrounds this most important and continuously vexing dilemma it should be enough to observe that the theory/practice equation has been so dichotomised in the rhetoric of our field that most intellectually honest attempts to say something new or offer a fresh formulation end up suffering from redundancy or circularity. Would it not be better to simply acknowledge that the best defense of practice is its method? The real world of experience, refracted and reflected through the lenses of careful thought, commitment to high standards and a belief in the value of doing good will serve us as well as any and highly abstract theory/practice formula. *[It might very well be, as I try to think about this, that "mind as action" may be as good a formula in the theory/practice dilemma that we can formulate.]*

As I prepared for this talk, using my own history as a guide, a kind of metaphor for the field -- this by the way I confess is an act of enormous hubris on my part -- I came increasingly to question almost all of what I thought I knew and understood to be "right" about what makes this field the place that we have chosen to play out our professional lives. Increasingly my thoughts were driven by questions that my own practice never allowed me to act on; rarely did I have a chance to raise them or articulate them in ways that might have mattered or made a difference. Now I will confess that because I led a dual professional life -- I both led and professed -- it was possible for me to charge forward in the academic arena, but the practice field, which mattered most for me, was a much more difficult setting in which to contest the prevailing orthodoxies. *[There is no question about it, when you got into the business, in the real world, the theory/practice nexus is obscured, is confounded, it literally breaks down in times, because there is the business of getting down and on with the business, of helping, of making sure that tomorrow occurs so there is a place to be acted out, acted on. So, what I wanted to do at times was not always realized, obviously.]* So I continue to struggle with the theory/practice dilemma, while at the same time I wonder whether we will ever be able to settle the question of ownership -- who owns adult education. And whose interests are to be served -- whose interests shall be served in an increasingly technological commodified culture which respects only success, has little room for failure and failures and where value is determined primarily by accounting ledgers. Is it any wonder that we are still struggling to comprehend what might advance learning *for* and *by* adults. If such understandings are to be subject to market place tests and dollar sign rhetoric the very human enterprise of adult education is at serious risk.

I asked earlier where we might look for answers -- I should amend that and suggest that the best we can hope for is guidance, counsel, sound advice -- for we have come to understand I think, that answers in a post-modern world are not attainable. They imply more than is truly possible! I thought I could at least find some helpful clues which might alleviate some of my concerns, or at least offer palliating relief. So I did a quick survey of the last 25 years of *The Adult Education Quarterly.* (Am I a masochist and glutton for punishment?) *[The University of Cantebury in New Zealand – near where I now reside – has a wonderful adult education collection including all, the entire bound history of Adult Education Quarterly, and almost all of the other major adult education journals. It was quite wonderful and a big surprise when I came down there.]* I'm not sure what I was looking for -- I had, of course, seen most of the issues as they appeared -- but I wanted to believe the then foremost American journal in our field would help me confront some of the issues I struggled with. None of you will be surprised to learn that I was disappointed, that I found most (but certainly not all especially the essays and book reviews) of the work wanting, little new and much of it tiresome -- and from a purely literary (linguistic) perspective dull, very dull. A sad indictment coming from someone who sees the world in poetic terms. I don't think that many of the writings that we might hold valuable in adult education would make anyone's best seller list. *[Maybe we shouldn't expect them to. But, in our heart of hearts we want them to, we really do.]* The issues I raised earlier: ownership; whose interests are served, the advancement of learning, are certainly spoken to in AEQ, *[I don't want to suggest that these important issues aren't]* but our understandings are barely advanced by the commentary -- it is too narrow, too driven by positivistic conventions, *[particularly in the early era]* too self-consciously concerned for a readership of reputation judgers.

If my premise here has any merit we are still left with the questions of where to turn, to whom shall we pay attention? I will offer some of the usual chestnuts -- obviously Lindeman, but more so Dewey and more Dewey. And despite my strictures earlier, there are things to learn from Knowles and Knox and Houle and that mainline stream of thinking in American adult education. But I believe strongly that there is another tradition which respects the historical roots of our field and which can serve as both anchor and corrective to much of what appears to be ailing in us. Lindeman and Dewey both represented an older intellectual tradition which we in our enthusiasms to represent adult education as a unique field of *[education,]* study and practice tended to overlook if not down right reject. Both of these thinkers were firmly embedded in the western intellectual tradition and deeply influenced by the canon of dead white male writing -- there is no escaping this fact. My allusion to Plato at the beginning of this talk was purposeful, intentional, for if I can argue for Malcolm Knowles, which I comfortably can, I can equally so argue for Plato and Aristotle, Spinoza and Locke as well as Emma Goldman and Jane Addams, Nell Noddings and Amy Guttman -- and I shall. All of these people continue to speak to us and have much to teach us.

The more I struggle to understand myself and to comprehend the meaning of my own history as an adult educator the more I have come to realize that even Jack Mezirow's theories of personal transformation have eluded me. While I may have both taught and fought Mezirow I was never fully persuaded that what we all wanted to believe was possible could possibly make sense to a poor un or undereducated oppressed Appalachian or an inner-city citizen barely surviving on the margins of society. Why should such conceptions shrouded in arcane near inaccessible language (coded and secret -- perhaps not even fully realizable to many of us in the field) have any meaning or any guidance for thought or action? *[Particularly when adult education confronts the problems we ought to confront on a day-to-day basis.]*

Contrary to the contemporary ideology of American adult education the great bulk of adults who return for further education -- no matter the context or the form -- behave as traditional students. They, for the most part, eschew notions of participatory, self discovery, self directed learning, they want to be *taught* -- they know instinctively what we have either forgotten or refuse to admit or recognize. As Michael Oakshot reminds us teaching and learning are inextricably linked and we must guard against teaching being reduced to "mere instruction" and for those of us who struggle to understand through inquiry we need to resist the reduction of scholarship to research. *[This is a special problem for those of us who come from an academic perspective. There is something different in scholarship than research. Research is simply a support system for scholarship; it is not in and of itself an end.]* We need to remind ourselves always that we are something more in fact than facilitators of learning -- that we stand for something which transcends the conventions of customary practice.

After near two decades at University Extension I chose to move on. I did so because what had been one of the truly great centres of University Continuing *[Education in America of]* education practice was slowly but surely being suffocated as it was being appropriated by a university administration unwilling to accept a non-conforming educational agency in its midst. The irony of this, of course, is that now nearly twenty years later with so many institutions of higher education in the U.S. looking to extension and continuing education arms as a steady source of new *[programmes, ideas]* and ready cash the University of Michigan has none! *[So, I had my resentment for a quarter of a century, and I don't like feeling that way about it.]*

So I jumped ship! This time I accepted an offer (again the old boys network) *[I might say this time that the old boys network continues to work; even in the fact of institutional practice and standards of Affirmative Action, disclosure and responsible conduct. Universities in particular are very much closed systems and customary practice is so deeply embedded in the fabric of the institution that it is very difficult to shake ones self out of that and particularly when you talk about hiring practices.]* to lead the School of Social Works' Continuing Education Programme in the Human Services. This was as mutli-faceted field based, applied research, training and continuing education programme. I moved from a general purpose university adult education enterprise to a highly specialized, narrowly focused, professionally oriented C.E. programme. The differences were profound. *[I wasn't quite ready for that and I didn't know how that worked.]* Those that I experienced almost immediately were embedded in the language of professional discourse. At University Extension the weight of tradition and history shaped our conversation, informed the decisions we took and contributed directly to the design of our programmes. At Social Work C.E. the language was highly specific, technical and very narrowly focused. I, without realizing it had walked into the future! *[I walked out of the door of one building 'technically and narrowly focused', and into another building 'focused on the future'.]* For twenty years I had been consorting with the voices of Lindeman and Croly, had been hearing echoes of Dewey's concern for *The Public and Its Problems* and even Emerson's provocative formulations in *Self Reliance* all of which were consistent with my own beliefs and training -- life at University Extension both confirmed and expanded my own liberal education. But life at Social Work C.E. was to teach me still more of life's lessons! Not only was the discourse different, but the value orientation differed sharply from what I had come to accept as the prevailing belief system of our profession. Social Work's vision of continuing education was less tradition bound, less self conscious about its place in the pantheon of adult education history and certainly unconcerned with any of the controversies that were taking up the pages of professional adult education journals in the early 1980's.

What occupied me and my colleagues was a set of narrowly defined questions that spoke to issues of professional competency, technical proficiency, certification, improved agency performance, organisational efficiency and accountability. These issues which I confronted over two decades ago continue to dominate the agenda of much of what passes for adult education today. No matter the labels ascribed to activity or program, what I have just recounted describes the central tendencies of American adult education program practice. If we add to these descriptors the increasing tendencies to invest more and more of our resources in training and retraining activities we will have accounted for much what passes for the universe of publicly known adult education at all levels of practice.

If my accounting of the tendencies of our field is at all close to accurate it poses some deep and troubling questions for us. For example, in the face of all that adult education claims to stand for is the raw fact of the intractability of so many problems it wishes to address. We cannot deny the validity of Plato's self-evident truth: there are natural inequalities in this world that cannot be changed. What we can tend to is how people are treated, with dignity and respect one hopes, yet acknowledging the limits of our reach. There is enough evidence from the recent history of our times to teach us some quite trenchant lessons -- most of which are a function of the apparent immutability of human nature, *[character]* and behaviour.

No better example of this phenomenon of immutability can be found than in the recent Indian film *Earth*. Directed by the filmmaker who also gave us *Fire*, *Earth* is a fully realized and highly dramatic account of a single moment in India's struggle for independence. That moment is the fateful decision to partition the country engineered by an uncaring, cynical and callused British regime about to abandon all responsibility for law and order and assurance of a peaceful democratic transition to independence. What we, the viewers of this beautifully crafted film, see is how thin the veneer, the patina of civilisation truly is -- how the limits of friendships are quickly tested and breached when intense feelings of race, ethnicity and religion are deployed for ulterior purposes. Against the forces unleashed at such moments no amount of education, no rhetorical assertion of tolerance and commitments to civility and democratic discourse will matter -- hatred and bigotry will have their way. Rousseau's idealization of the Noble Savage may only mask the savage in all of us, for most likely the nobility has largely been missing.

Robert Kaplan in *The Ends of the Earth* offers a chilling assessment of the prospects for civilized behavior in many parts of the world as the Twentieth century ends. He is reporting from the "frontiers of anarchy" as he calls them and offers little hope that either education or economic development is likely to save tens of millions of people already enslaved by intolerable conditions which exist in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. But as we all know we do not have to look to obscure hidden unpronounceable named countries in the Asian steppes to observe the intracableness of our condition. Northern Ireland, the Balkans (which Kaplan nearly a decade ago predicted would devour itself) Israel and Palestine, all display the emblems of resistance to reason and decency. In the face of this what may we ask should be adult education's stance? How should it respond? Can it respond?

Is it possible to imagine that we can find ways to achieve or arrive at what Eric Erikson forty years ago defined as the central elements in the development of an ethical system that fosters genuine and stable identity? Erikson postulated that an ideology which contained "a coherent body of shared images, ideas, and ideals ... provides for the participants a coherent if systematically simplified orientation in space in time in means and ends." It is just such a systematic orientation that represents the great challenge and promise for us adult educators. Hidden in Kaplan's alarming accounting of human intractability is an astounding alternative uplifting story. He reports of the great adult education and literacy experiment in India's Rishi Valley -- an experiment which engages the entire community -- the young, the old, the literate and the illiterate. And its genius is to be found in its self-defined local, communal, nongovernmental, open, accessible and democratically charged ethos. No part of the necessary activities of daily life -- the very basic functions of agriculture, industry, health and sanitation, education (at all levels) is excluded from the Rishi Valley project. I was reminded as I read about it of Yeaxlee's formulation of almost a century ago -- adult education is but "friends teaching friends" and also I thought of Dewey's admonition that education is not preparation for life, it is life.

The story of my life as an adult educator has a ways to go yet. As you know I prepared this talk nearly 12,000 miles from here. I live in a house overlooking the Pacific Ocean, *[and when I wake in the morning I see the sun rise over the ocean, and before I go to sleep at night I see the sun set over the Southern Alps; quite a astonishing experience. It has had some effect on me.]* only seven hours from the South Pole and daily find myself confronting a new culture and a new way of life – my education is just beginning. I left the United States feeling that its loss of confidence in its prospects for the future and a commensurate decline in the optimism which was so typical of the American character signalled trouble ahead. While this may be an accurate assessment of what is happening here it hardly matters to the rest of the world. All of us are captives of the ethno-centric power of place and space -- my relatively short time in New Zealand has taught me already some potent lessons. The first of which is that America barely exists in my consciousness (it may be that I could be accused of being unconscious most of the time!). *[It is an interesting phenomenon that in America, Washington thinks that the world needs America's leadership. I can tell you that the world does not need America's leadership; in fact, the world will be better without it.]* Even the A.P.E.C. summit held in New Zealand and Clinton's visit could not alter the fact that what matters is what happens close to the lived experiences of each of us.

Tip O'Niel, that wise political savant, once said "all politics is local", and the same thing can be said of the prospects for adult education. My journey has taught me that the localism of practice affords the greatest opportunities for us to do our best work -- perhaps the only opportunity to do so. As the Twentieth Century closes it is increasingly clear that grand designs, national policies, universal declarations offer little hope of solving deeply rooted problems -- problems which are systemic in nature and deny to too many of our fellow citizens every, where the basic elements of a decent existence. East Timor, a blazing and passionately felt issue down under *[students in Australia and New Zealand were out in the streets demonstrating on this; local political parties organised rallies. Yet it]* is beyond our reach. But educational need in our neighborhoods need not be.

Joseph Kett in his wonderful, yet flawed account of the history of American adult education offers a sobering notion as to the place of adult educators in the provision of adult education today. He writes:

> "... no one can plausibly describe adult education as a marginal activity, but professional adult educators have become increasingly marginal to the education of adults."

Is Kett correct -- does he accurately describe what is happening? The answer of course is both yes and no. If you believe as I have argued that adult education has been and will remain on the margins of our culture and that it is best located there for its strengths and capacities are fostered by such a placement then he is wrong. But if we want to be regarded as central players in the educational establishment he is correct, but we shall then be denied a room of our own.

Our own room, of course, requires us to act in responsive and responsible ways. It means confronting the question of our complicity in an educational enterprise that privileges some and disowns the most needy. It means that not all educational activities directed to adults are inherently desirable or socially valuable or necessarily advance the common weal. It means that we must resist the increasing tendencies to allow public resources to be appropriated for private gain and profit. And most of all it means that the subjects of our enterprises are the only true and worthy occupants of adult education's house.

Remember, seventy-five years ago Eduard Lindeman wrote:

> "... that human nature is varied, changing and fluid, we know
> that life's meanings are conditioned by the individual."

Nothing has changed since then; individuals continue to be the authors of their own life stories and create for themselves and for individual others the meanings which matter in the conduct of their lives. These are actions of moral beings who provide us with both the challenge and the opportunity to act in equally moral fashion.

I shall end my story by briefly telling someone else's story. Gus Garside, a British musician and educator, in a lively essay entitled "She's doing too much music" recounts that one of his former adult students was denied further enrollment in his music class. When he inquired as to the reason he was told "she's doing too much music." Garside said, "I bet no one ever said that to Yehudi Menuhin." The rejoinder followed immediately -- "But she's not Yehudi Menuhin."

There can never be "too much music" just as there can never be too much good and thoughtful, sensibly grounded, locally rooted, democratically responsive adult education.

**Tungia te ururua**
**Kia tupu whakaritorito**
**Te tapa o te harakeke.**
*Clear away the undergrowth*
*So that new shoots may emerge*

(from the Maori)

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